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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE INTRODUCTION.]

SHE SHINES ME DOWN.

(BY ANNIE THOMAS.)

CHAPTER XXI.

But if others share with me
Farewell to him, whose'er he be;
But if thou use me as a blind
I'll never love thee more.

"This path doesn't seem to lead to anything pleasant, does it?" Lord Ellerdale says, giving a lingering look back at the lawn just before they turn a corner and enter upon a little arid bit of ground enclosed by privet hedges, whereon the Fitzsater linen is wont to dry itself.

"Very few of the paths that I've ever followed have led to anything pleasant," Gladys replies, as she poises herself on a rickety bench that has been hastily improvised by the village carpenter expressly for this gala-day.

Lord Ellerdale has no reply ready to make either to the dreary words or to the desolate tone in which they are uttered.

He, therefore, stands towering by her side, looking down upon her from his stately height with admiration unquestionably, but also with something that rather resembles impatience.

The admiration is merely her due. No man could look upon her at this moment without feeling it, and, in some way or other, expressing it.

There is a wistful look in her eyes to-day that

puts more beauty into the beautiful face than Lord Ellerdale has ever seen in it before.

A look of sorrow, of suffering, of soul, that is a revelation to him.

"Don't you think we have stayed long enough in Lady Fitz's drying ground?" he asks with an easy laugh, presently.

"If you think so, we have, certainly," she replies, but there is no answering laugh in her voice, no answering smile on her face.

"You know—you must know—how delighted I am to see you again," he says, growing graver, "but I owe it to you not to show that delight too plainly. Your beauty makes every ugly woman your enemy, and your charming, graceful manner makes the awkward ones spiteful; and as most of the women here are ugly and awkward, you see you have not too many friends left."

"I don't think I'm afraid of the ugly and awkward women frightening you out of your friendship for me," she says, softly.

"Nor need you be afraid of a Venus and a Circe winning it from you," he says, warmly.

"Both Lady Ellerdale and you have been kind—very kind indeed, about that—horrible affair," she says, impetuously. "From her I have received such consideration as has made me wish I were a better woman, in order that I might repay it properly—"

"And from me you have such homage as a man—"

"Stop! Lord Ellerdale! I know exactly what I have from you, and I brought you here this afternoon to let you see that I know it—"

"You can't appreciate it, and you can't fail to misunderstand it in a great measure," he inter-

rupts, hastily, looking back over his shoulder in the direction of the lawn which is shut out from their view by the privet hedge; "you can't fail to misunderstand it, because I dare not express it clearly. I have been heart and soul with Lady Ellerdale in every attempt which she has made to show her unaltered friendly feeling for you."

Gladys rises.

"It is time we went back to the others," she says, throwing her head back with a little scornful gesture that shows Lord Ellerdale that never more will words of his have power to sway her one way or the other.

He has flattered her assiduously on every occasion on which he has met her, and he has made countless occasions for meeting her which would never have occurred without his seeking.

He has proffered his friendship to her in the frank and regal way which is part of his inheritance from his royal ancestor.

He has won her gratitude as a woman by leading his wife on to show her subtle, touching, womanly kindness.

He has commanded her attention by showing all around them that she commands his.

And now

Now the day has come when he can do without her friendship, and forget that he has prayed her to accept and trust in his.

Gladys sees the change the moment that it takes place, understands the cause of it, and realises that she has in him now a cruel though unconscious enemy.

For he having failed in his faith to her will be pitiless in strengthening the act of accusation against her

"You will be at the otter-hunt to-morrow, I suppose?" he asks, as they saunter back from the drying-ground to society.

"Yea. Miss Gascoigne and I will both be at the Low-pool at ten o'clock. I shall put her under your charge, Lord Ellerdale; she'll ride a steady old pony of Arch's, but the steadiest pony goes wrong sometimes, and you must show where to ford in safety."

"Won't you let me take care of you?" he says, with a slight air of constraint.

"No, thank you, on ordinary occasions Steel Grey and I take care of each other. To-morrow Arch will take care of us both. But don't forget to look after Miss Gascoigne. As a preliminary I'll introduce you now."

Miss Gascoigne is engaged in playing lawn-tennis, or rather in going into a series of pretty attitudes, in apparent pursuance of the game. She does it all so well that only a few people find out that she is posing, and not playing lawn-tennis at all.

Lord Ellerdale finds out the sham in a moment, and is delighted at it, and with her and himself.

The handsome actress makes no mistake about it.

It is her mission in life to make herself as beautiful and entertaining as it is in her to be for the amusement of such as himself.

He is delighted to be introduced to Miss Gascoigne, but he will let Lady Fitzslater know that he has caught her tripping in a matter of social etiquette in having thus brought Miss Gascoigne into social contact with his wife. He, on his part, makes "no mistake about it" either.

Miss Gascoigne is all very well—is indeed remarkably well in her way, and it is all very well and agreeable and proper for him to know her.

But it is altogether another matter when she comes to be invited to meet the Countess of Ellerdale.

"You've had enough of this, and if I were in your place I'd go home," he says to his wife, making a point of approaching her with all the deference he so well knows how to portray, while Mrs. Saltoun waits hard by to introduce him to Miss Gascoigne.

"Mrs. Saltoun has just told me she wishes to make her friend known to me. I must wait for that, I suppose," Lady Ellerdale says, with the amiability which is so much a part of herself that she never gets any credit for it.

"Well, if I were in your place, I wouldn't bore myself by waiting about in the dew to pick up any waifs and strays Lady Fitz may have collected," he says, with an air of dreading the damp for her which touches her womanly heart very tenderly, and so without another word she allows herself to be enfolded in a cashmere shawl, put into her carriage, and sent back to Dalesmeet without him.

By reason of this early departure, Lady Ellerdale misses what is unanimously pronounced for many days afterwards to be the best part of the entertainment.

Miss Gascoigne is prevailed upon to give a 'recitation,' and she gives a couple of them. "The Ride from Ghent to Aix," and "Maud Muller," the first with a fiery force, and the second with a heart-rending pathos that brings the whole company throbbing and melting to her side.

"This is the moment, Lord Ellerdale," Gladys says, with what would be a sneer on a less pretty lip than hers; "let me take this opportunity of introducing you to my friend, Miss Gascoigne."

Lady Fitzslater is in despair! All the claret-wine and tea is drunk, and all the ices and fruits are eaten, and still people stay on aimlessly, as it seems to her exhausted and discomfited ladyship.

"I want them to go, for I want my dinner," she snarls out to Miss Clisson, who has by this time assumed that parboiled appearance, which light complexioned, florid women are apt to assume after sitting for many hours under the rays of a summer afternoon sun, over the fumes of steaming tea.

"Mrs. Saltoun's friend is keeping people, I

fancy," Miss Clisson says, directing Lady Fitz's eyes towards the spot where the actress, exquisitely posed, is engaged in enthralling the peer.

"It was like Mrs. Saltoun's audacity to bring a play-actress here at all," Lady Fitz says, almost chaumping and foaming with fatigue and wrath. "And as she has brought her, it's her bounden duty to keep her from ranting and raving and proclaiming her profession to everybody. I don't want to have a young girl like Georgina vitiated, and I certainly don't want to have my dinner ruined, and my appetite murdered, so I'll hint to Mrs. Saltoun that the sooner she makes her friend leave off making an exhibition of herself the better."

"I think Mrs. Saltoun will not be unwilling to give the hint," Miss Clisson whispers, with a giggle; "she doesn't like to see herself out out with her friends the Ellerdals, and Lord Ellerdale hasn't a word or a look for anyone but Miss Gascoigne since he's been introduced to her."

"Umph! I don't feel too sure of that," Lady Fitzslater rejoins, delighted in her wrath at being able to disagree with and contradict her toady. "I saw him following Mrs. Saltoun up the laurel path in a way Lord Fitzslater would never have permitted any man to follow me if he had been alive."

"But he went against his will, I'm sure," Miss Clisson says, with suave spite. "One can always see if a man does a thing against his will; drawing a married man off in that way, too, and she a married woman; it is such a pity."

"Lady Ellerdale went hours ago," Lady Fitz says, looking round her hungrily; "have these people who stay on no consciences and no dinner hours? And where's Georgina that she isn't here to help me to get rid of them?"

"I saw dear Georgina go into the laurel path with Mr. Felton about half an hour ago," the companion says, innocently, mentioning, of course by the merest chance, the name of the man who is justly regarded as the most intelligible man in the county.

"And if you saw her do anything so—so degradingly foolish," said Lady Fitzslater, champing and foaming, according to her wont, when excited, "why didn't you tell me, or go after her?"

"I love Georgina dearly, dearly," Miss Clisson says, trying to throw a good deal of wounded tone into her words; "but I know better than to interfere with her. Dear Georgina always remembers that she is the daughter, and that I am only the paid companion; and she makes me remember it, too."

"She's quite right to remember everything of the sort," Lady Fitz says, with beautiful unconscious disregard of the feelings of her slave; "but when she forgets that she is my daughter to the extent of rambling off to the drying ground with a man like Felton, who'd only marry her that she might keep him in clover on my money, then it's high time that you remembered that you are my paid companion, and that it's your duty to look after those interests of mine which I cannot attend to myself."

"If I were you I'd put arsenic in that woman's tea," Philip Felton—a worn-out, effeminately handsome, vice-corroded man—says to Georgina Finlay about ten minutes after as they come lawn-wards from the drying-ground as Lady Fitzslater, with cruel veracity, denominates the only sequestered spot she has provided for sequestered-spot loving guests.

Georgina laughs.

"You're afraid that I shall want to hamper the house with poor Clisson when we marry, Phil. Don't be afraid of that; I shall leave her here to look after my interests, and save mamma from the nets that will be spread for her feet at once by a lot of her own poverty-stricken relations."

"You think she is to be trusted? Don't rely on her too much, Georgie," he says, anxiously,

and Georgina strokes her false hair laden as vigorously as she dares as she answers:

"Of course I can trust her, for it's her own interest to serve me, who will probably outlive her, rather than mamma who may die any day, and who would no more think of providing for Clisson's comfort when Clisson can no longer conduce to hers, than she would of leaving an annuity to a cat; now while I live Clisson will be useful to me, so I'll make it worth her while to be trustworthy to me."

"I'm going to marry into a pleasant family," Felton thinks, and even in his sordid, bankruptcy-burdened soul he does begin to question whether such a calculating machine as Georgina Finlay is exactly the sort of woman whom it is desirable to select as the mother of his children. Meanwhile Lord Ellerdale has been making the time pass very pleasantly for Miss Gascoigne.

She is quite sufficiently well versed in the intricacies of social life to know that it is a very different thing to hold converse with Lord Ellerdale here in the sacred precincts of his own county set, to being honoured by his attentions at a London luncheon or supper-party.

She is well accustomed to playing at being a countess, and even a queen herself. But an earl in real life among his own class of women is a new figure on the canvas of her life.

Naturally and honestly she is intensely gratified, and as she is driving home presently with her friend Gladys she shows this gratification.

"Lord Ellerdale says he hopes you'll take me to luncheon at Dalesmeet," she begins, posing her fine form and fine feet in her usual manner—a manner which Gladys suddenly finds to be objectionable, though she has never objected to it before.

"I think I shall wait for Lady Ellerdale to invite us, before I take you or myself there," Mrs. Saltoun replies; and Geraldine Gascoigne shrugs her shoulders, and thinks:

"What an idiot she is to show jealousy, being a married woman."

CHAPTER XXII.

And oh! if any truth be found
In the dull schoolman's theme—
If friendship is an empty sound,
And Love an idle dream!

"On the whole, I think that green pastures are pleasanter in William Black's novels than in real life," Miss Gascoigne says, ungratefully, one morning to her hostess as the two are about to start for the low pool in the Dalesmeet grounds, to play at otter hunting, and go through the serious business of a peripatetic picnic.

The beautiful star of the London stage is looking her handsomest this day.

Her figure lacks the supple ease and sinuous grace which are such marked characteristics of Mrs. Saltoun's almost faultless form; but it is a striking structure enough as it is seen clearly outlined in a habit that fits creaselessly, and that at the same time does not convey a suggestion of being tight, or of in any way impeding the free play of the muscles beneath it.

It has not been without much anxious thought, and many misgivings, that Miss Gascoigne has put on riding gear, and pledged herself to get upon a horse this day.

Gladys, with generous good nature, has endeavoured to persuade her friend to do the safe and comely thing, drive to the scene of action namely, and take up a becoming position there in comfort and safety.

But Geraldine Gascoigne has been deaf on this occasion to the voice of friendship, and has preferred risking her neck and her reputation for doing all things well, rather than tacitly confess her inability to rival Gladys in the riding sphere.

The steadiest, easiest, and safest of tried and trusted steeds has been selected with much care by Arch Saltoun to bear the honoured burden,

and the difficulties of getting into the saddle have been surmounted; not too gloriously, but still without actual and glaring disgrace by Miss Gascoigne.

The old bay, as he is familiarly called in the Friars Court stables, takes the matter of managing himself entirely to himself, and utterly disregarding the way in which his fair burden bores away at the curb, he keeps side by side with Steel Grey, who is going over the ground merrily at that famous trot of his of which Gladys is so proud.

The old bay knows better than to enter into idle competition with this trot, and so everything is made comfortable so far for Miss Gascoigne by his kindness in keeping to a smart, softly-undulating canter.

Arch is with them, and it perplexes Miss Gascoigne not a little to find that the husband and wife converse with each other as easily as if they were sitting in chairs, as they skim over the ground.

They put in all their commas, and never come to a full stop with a jerk, in a way that is mortifying to her, as she finds herself unable to speak without an obtrusive pant, though the old bay goes along like a rocking-horse.

A gay group, some riding, some in Norfolk carts, others on foot, are assembled on the banks of the other pool, under the shade of green trees whose boughs sweep down to kiss their own reflections in the water.

Steel Grey's powers are so well known and widely recognised that it is a looked-for sight this one of his mistress mounted on him at otter-hunts.

He can jump like a cat, climb up the steepest rocky-sided banks like a monkey, and swim like a fish.

Wherever he is he is sure to be right. No pangs assail the 'master's' heart as to the possibility of his killing a hound, or committing any other awkwardness, even when he drops into the river into the midst of the pack, as it seems.

He and his mistress are so entirely one that never a doubt of either of them is felt. But discerning eyes see that it is very different with Miss Gascoigne and the old bay.

He and his rider are not in unison, and his is the master mind. She does not say to him in so many words, "Whither thou goest, I will go," but he feels in the nerves of his mouth that he can go wherever he pleases without let or hindrance from the young person on his back.

There is a great uproar and confusion presently among those who are dabbling in the river, and leaping about on its banks, and an old dog-otter is down stream with the hounds and its human hunters closely after it.

They lose it soon, and concentrate all their energies on a hole into which it has not gone, and meanwhile the other makes its way along through eddying pools, and under the protecting shadow of innumerable boulders into a favourite haunt of its own, whose watery recesses have never yet been defiled by the presence of either man or dog.

There is a good deal of shouting and hallooing, of scampering about on the banks, and bounding hither and thither by the aid of long otter poles, of exciting the hounds to a pursuit that those astute animals presently discover to be aimless, and of much ado about nothing generally.

Then as the hounds begin to loiter about, and lose their look of keenness, a calm succeeds the hubbub, even ardent sportsmen seem to think it no waste of time to give over all consideration for the others for a period, and devote their attention considerably to the luncheon (which Lady Ellerdale's servants have arranged delectably as if by magic in the course of a few minutes on a slope under the shade of some grand old beeches), and in justice be it added a little to the ladies.

"Mrs. Saltoun looks quite melancholy to-day, don't she?" Miss Classon whispers to Miss Finlay, as they stand about together, or follow each other closely in that 'whither-so-ever-thou-goest-I-will-go' way which is sometimes

affected by young ladies who fail to secure similar tributes of devotion from men.

"I should say that she looked sulky, not melancholy merely," Miss Finlay replies. "I'm sure she has an awful temper, and leads that poor Arch a dreadful life. She can't stand not being first with everyone, and there's Lord Ellerdale making more of that Miss Gascoigne than he is of Mrs. Saltoun."

"I wonder Lady Ellerdale lets him make such an old idiot of himself," says Miss Classon, who has never caught so much as a stray glance from his lordship coming in her own direction.

"He isn't old, and he's a man of family and rank," Miss Finlay, who is tenacious of the dignity of her own caste, retorts, sharply.

"Well, for my own part his lordship's attentions would never flatter me," Miss Classon says, feeling as if she could slaughter her frank friend on the spot.

"Oh, nonsense, Classy; it's all very well for people who don't know him to talk in that way about Lord Ellerdale."

"It's true I don't know him, personally," Miss Classon explains, with the nearest approach to a stately manner which nature has enabled her to assume. "I don't know him personally, nor do I regret it; but though I never allude to it, Lord Ellerdale and I are distantly related; a second cousin of my aunt's. Miss O'Flaherty, of O'Flaherty, County Wicklow, married a step-daughter of a second cousin of Lord Ellerdale's."

"Perhaps Lord Ellerdale isn't as well posted up in the exact relationship as you appear to be," Miss Finlay remarks, affably.

Then she finds someone else not actually averse to talking to her and providing her with luncheon, and so, after the manner of her kind, she leaves Miss Classon to herself.

Some of the random shots fired by these young ladies hit the eye of the target of truth very nearly.

In sharp and painful reality Mrs. Saltoun is annoyed, not so much at seeing Lord Ellerdale lavish a remarkable amount of attention upon her friend, as at the manner and the means by which her friend is leading him on to do it.

The actress is accustomed to do most things with an eye to broad effects, so now, when at length she is persuaded to descend from her horse, she has one qualm as to how she will ever get up again.

She poses on the most comfortable knoll nearest to the table-cloth, and with an air of playful authority, indicates that Lord Ellerdale is to take up a position at her feet.

Need it be told that when once she gets him there she makes manifest to the whole hunt there assembled that he is the slave of her matchless charms.

"He can't like her; he can't feel anything like the friendship for her that he has professed to feel for me," Gladys thinks now and again, as she darts a glance in the direction of her renegade admirer, and the friend who is undermining her with him.

An instinct tells the married woman that she is being quietly let down in the estimation of this powerful county ally of hers.

Let down surely and deeply, but in such an intangible way that explanation will be difficult, and the task of reinstating herself impossible.

As is usually the case, instinct does not err.

Miss Gascoigne is employed in the work of which she is suspected.

But if she were taxed with perfidy she would indignantly repudiate the charge, and call Lord Ellerdale to witness that she had never said "anything but what was kind of Gladys."

Indeed, up to the present, she dare not go further than attempt to daunt with faint praise the woman in whose house she is staying, and who is treating her with the affection and confidence of a sister.

But if she can mature a plan that has come into her mind, the faint praise will cease altogether, and in justification of her own treachery to friendship, she will accuse Gladys of having been unworthy of retaining it.

Just now she is lightly skimming over the subject of the presentation.

"It must have been most mortifying to poor dear, ambitious Gladys," she says, as if she had pressed repeatedly to present herself before her sovereign, and had invariably had the good taste to refuse.

"I think Mrs. Saltoun was a little cut up; she naturally thought more of it than other people did," his lordship replies.

"Yes; of course, whether she was or whether she wasn't, couldn't be a matter of importance to society at large, for society at large doesn't know her. She is quite melo-dramatic in her love of mystery. It's the only weak point in her character."

"Have some salad, I can recommend it," Lord Ellerdale interrupts. He can bring himself to neglect Gladys for a day or two, in order to give himself the transitory pleasure of seeing that he has caused another beautiful woman's heart to flutter with gratified vanity, but he cannot bring himself to listen tamely when Mrs. Saltoun is scoffed at.

"I will take some of the salad, and spare your feelings about the one weak point; can't you bear to hear that she is anything short of perfection? I am sure I admire her quite as much as you do, and like her—well, quite as much as you ought to like her," Miss Gascoigne says, laughing a defiantly merry, meaning laugh.

"I don't like her a bit more than any man who is a gentleman ought to like one of the sweetest, loveliest, most charming women that ever lived," he replies, rather coldly.

"She is a dear thing," Miss Gascoigne answers, quietly, "and I for one, always stand up for her, and never let anyone say a word against her before me; people were so unkind about that Dublin business. She was silly to show her liking for one man as plainly as she did, because it enraged another man; besides, all the while the one she flattered up so preferred me, odd as it may appear."

Lord Ellerdale will not allow himself to be allured into paying the woman present a compliment at the expense of the absent. But Miss Gascoigne's eyes are challenging him to say something pretty to her, so he says it:

"Nothing very odd in a man preferring you to all the world," he says, politely, and Miss Gascoigne assumes a thoughtful expression as she ponders over the possibilities his speech offers to her mental vision. If he means what he says—and Lady Ellerdale who looks delicate would only be good enough to die—who knows what might happen.

Meantime it behoves her in duty to herself to take care that Gladys shall not re-assert that dangerous friendly sway she has had over her hitherto.

"There is never anything wrong in Gladys' flirtations, I'm sure of that," she remarks.

So is Lord Ellerdale, "very sure of it."

"She hasn't heart enough, and she's too fickle; she likes to engross them, and interest them, and laugh at them, and throw them over one after another."

Lord Ellerdale did not assent with glad warmth to this view of the case. He has been engrossed and interested by Gladys, but he hardly likes to feel that he may have filled the whole of the routine programme.

To admire a married woman greatly and feel sure that there is nothing wrong in her accepting the expression of his admiration is one thing.

It is quite another thing for a man to feel that he may have been laughed at and thrown over.

Luncheon is over at last, and rather more languidly than at starting, the mighty hunters prepare to resume the pleasant business of the day.

Gladys and Miss Gascoigne are standing together for a minute or two, waiting for their horses.

"You seemed to find Lord Ellerdale amusing?" Gladys says, striving to speak unconcernedly.

"Amusing?" Miss Gascoigne replies, shrug-

ging her shoulders, and speaking in infinite scorn. "Don't make any mistake about it, my dear. He found me amusing, and was pleased enough to get a few words from me, but I see nothing amusing, or pleasant, or fetching, in any way, in the great, fat, conceited thing."

A fire-flame spreads itself over Gladys' face. When a woman is in any degree fascinated by a man herself, she is intolerant to any other woman who disparages him, more especially if she has seen that same woman fighting tooth and nail to attract him.

Not only the perfidy causes her to feel distrust of her insolent rival on every point, but the vulgarity of the perfidy disgusts her.

"I think we had better get on our horses," she says, turning to Steel Grey.

And though Lord Ellerdale is by her side ready to give her a hand up, and she accepts his proffered aid, she will not look at him, and her thanks are given coldly to the man who is letting the woman who ridicules enchain him.

(To be Continued.)

AN ANCIENT PRUSSIAN BURIAL GROUND.

A GREAT prehistoric burial ground has recently been discovered at Cremmen (in the district of East-Havelland, Prussia), not far from Berlin. Numerous urns and ash-jars of varied form, all containing ashes and bones of burnt human remains, have been found. The urns are mostly round in shape, and stood some two and a half to three feet below the surface upon a large slab of stone; they were surrounded by round stones, and each was covered with a stone lid. The antiquities will all be deposited in the Provincial Museum of Berlin.

SMALL FEET.

FOR the sake of having small feet many an otherwise sensible woman will martyrize herself by pinching those plucky members of the body into boots a size too small. As a natural and necessary result of such pinching confinement, the foot becomes deformed and larger than it would naturally grow, with large joints and toes turned from a line parallel with the foot, to say nothing of the troublesome corns so annoying and crippling to a large class of young women. The worst results of this crippling custom of wearing small and narrow boots is felt by children when allowed to outgrow their boots.

It is poor economy to allow the young to wear boots when the feet have become too large for them, since deformity of the feet is easily produced at this time. When the boot is too short and the heel too high, the ingrowing of the nails is a perfectly natural result. Children will have sufficient ills to contend with without this crippling from deformed feet, the most prominent cause of which is small and badly-fitting boots and shoes.

LIME TREES AT LONGLEAT.

THE terrific hurricane that swept across this part of the country in October last uprooted from 200 to 300 trees on the Longleat estate. Fortunately, the old ornamental trees in the park did not suffer very severely. Five limes uprooted were the worst casualties in the park; three of them were standing in an exposed position, and were, consequently, wide-spreading, bushy-headed trees, and had short, rough, faulty butts more or less decayed at the core. These were sold some time ago for £28 the lot. The other two were growing in a grove, and were exceptionally fine, long, clean, sound timber trees. The longest measured 122ft., and the other 114ft. from the root to the topmost twig; the stem ran up clean without a branch

or break 63 ft. and 53ft. respectively; and the total contents of the two trees were 330 ft.

They were bought the other day by a London firm for pianoforte work, the price being £50 for the two trees just as they lay in the park.

ON the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Charlotte of Prussia, a carved oak chest was presented to her, executed by the pupils of the wood-carving establishment of the painter Magnussen in Schleswig. The chest was enriched by three reliefs, representing subjects taken from English history, and the lid rested on a rim of lions' heads. Altogether, this richly-ornamented work seems to have endeavoured to rival the magnificent marriage-coffers presented to brides of old, though we do not read that it was adorned, as they so often were, with paintings.

PLAIN OR PRETTY.

"Did you say she was 'humbly,'
stranger—

That woman who passed us just
now?

You were takin' no heed at the mo-
ment,

And so didn't notice me bow.

"My pardon? No, I ain't affronted,
But somehow I can't seem to see
That same little woman is humbly;
She looks kind o' purty to me.

"No red in her cheeks? Don't I know
it?

I know how the red roses went.

'No shine in her blue eyes? God bless
'em!

They look at me kind o' content.

"I've seen how the dim eyes could
lighten

When I trod on her toes—not her
heart—

Afore I got wild—well, no matter,
That's past, and I've took a new
start.

"No grace in her walkin'? I tell you
She's walked through the fire after
me,

And plucked me right out of perdi-
tion—

She's supple at bendin' her knee.

"She 'humbly'? I tell you what,
stranger,

When a man slips away out of sight
Of friends that all shake him, dis-
couraged,

And leave him to fight out his fight.

"With the devils of darkness, it may
be,

The face that still keeps a love-
light

For him, looks as fair as an angel,
If its roses are faded out white.

"You say she is 'humbly'? You think
so?

She isn't your mother, you see;
She's mine; an' she's purty—My
pardon,

You didn't know mother? I see.

"I take no offence for it, stranger;

But I'm only advisin' you, now,
Don't call any good woman, humbly,
Till you know who's related, and
how."

E. L.

THE wise man makes equity and justice the basis of all his conduct, the right forms the rule of his behaviour, deference and modesty mark his exterior, sincerity and fidelity serve him for accomplishments.

CAMEL-BREEDING IN TEXAS.

A TEXAS camel-breeder, speaking of the rearing of the "ships of the desert," says:—"They are no more trouble to raise than horses or cattle. The colts for the first three or four days are rather tender and require close attention, but after that take their chances with the herd. They feed on cactus and brush, eschewing all grasses that cattle and horses eat if the favourite cactus can be had. The females, with proper care, give a colt every year, and the price at which they are sold, the ease with which they are raised, their extreme docility, and the adaptability of our climate to their nature, would seem to indicate that camel-raising is a profitable business in Texas."

Mr. Lanfear says there is one camel in the herd that has travelled 150 miles between sun and sun, and that almost any well-broken camel is good for more than 100 miles in a day.

THIS BEAUTIFUL WORLD.

AN, this beautiful world! Indeed, we know not what to think of it. Sometimes it is all gladness and sunshine, and heaven itself lies not far off. And then it changes suddenly, and is dark and sorrowful and the clouds shut out the sky. In the lives of the saddest of us there are bright days like this, when we feel as if we could take the great world in our arms. Then come the gloomy hours, when the fire will neither burn in our hearts nor on our hearths; and all without and within is dismal, cold and dark. Every heart has its secret sorrows, and oftentimes we call a man cold when he is only sad.

RUINED!

THERE is a fair plot for a drama from the Paris police-courts. A youth comes to the capital full of literary ardour, but has the reception of mediocrity without influence. For a living he is obliged to enter a merchant's office. He obtains the confidence of his employer, and is working up when he hears that his father's good name and position are in jeopardy for the want of a couple of thousand francs. After a struggle he steals the sum from his cash box, and his home is saved. But the crime is discovered, and he is arrested. Hereupon his friends replace the deficit, but the law refuses to be appeased. His father visits him in gaol, and overwhelmed by the disgrace of which he has been the indirect cause, commits suicide. The judge moved to pity, passes a light sentence, but the young man's prospects are ruined, and all the romance fades out of his life at twenty-one.

THE LATE EMPEROR OF HAYTI.

AT the Opera the other evening attention was attracted to a coloured lady in one of the boxes, very elegantly dressed, and surrounded by a number of other persons of ebony complexion. It was the Princess Celia, daughter of Soulouque, once Emperor of Hayti, and her family. This descendant of the sovereign who was the first to place the Imperial Crown on his woolly head covering, usually resides in England.

It may be remembered that Soulouque, having declared himself Emperor of Hayti in 1849, created among the negro population 400 nobles, of whom four were princes, fifty-nine dukes, and twelve marquises. The others were counts, barons, and knights. He also created two orders for men—one military, that of Saint Faustin; the other civil, the legion of honour; also two for women—those of Sainte Madeleine and Sainte Anne, of which the two daughters of the Emperor were Grand Mistresses. Soulouque could not write more than his signature, and he could only read print.



[A MIDNIGHT DISCOVERY.]

THE WHISPERS OF NORMAN CHASE.

CHAPTER XIV.

He will not smile, not speak to me once more.

TENNYSON.

AMID the gaiety and wealth of Fairleigh Manor Augusta was not happy. Unrestricted mistress of herself, laughing down the interference attempted by her conventional chaperone, she astonished the neighbourhood by the splendour and variety of her entertainments.

Some there were who pityingly shook their heads.

Others—but these were not among her visitors—openly hinted that the girl was ruining her fortune and her good name at the same time, and that the provisions of the will which gave her unlimited authority over both were scandalous.

But not the most vigilant of guardians could detect the slightest glimpse or inkling of impropriety in her personal conduct.

Everybody wondered, however, why the name of Evelyn Hedley never passed her lips.

Nor was the curiosity less to know why a similar reticence was observed by Herbert Leaholme, whose love for Sir Norman's daughter had been no secret.

Here was a mystery, in which even "good society" found a delight.

Moreover, the only person who appeared to enjoy the confidence, in any degree, of the heiress of Fairleigh Manor was Herbert Leaholme, who was never absent from the general gaieties, and who was frequently at the house as the visitor of its youthful mistress and the old lady of title who lived in such constant dread lest her wilful charge should set the world

around Norman Chase on fire by some Arabian Nights' folly or another.

Augusta herself, though still outwardly imperious, was absorbed in far different thoughts. Gradually, a change appeared to have been coming over the demeanour of Herbert Leaholme. His comings and goings were less frequent. His manners were less unrestrained.

At one time, with the freedom of an almost brotherly intimacy, he called her "Augusta." He called her "Miss Fairleigh" now.

She fancied, occasionally, that he would attempt to say something which his lips refused to utter.

He seemed preoccupied and melancholy. His eyes frequently rested upon hers with a wistful expression, and were as suddenly withdrawn.

Nor were his looks unaltered. They were pale, and growing paler.

Augusta had often thought of and wondered at this; but her wonder might have been lessened had she known that an equal, if not a similar change was taking place in herself. Her tone towards him was not so frank as formerly; she did not invite his society; she held aloof from him in the ball-room, and never associated herself with him in those mimic dramas and amateur amusements which, from time to time, enhanced the enjoyment of the guests at Fairleigh Manor.

Evidently, an estrangement had arisen between these two. It was destined to be explained sooner than might have been anticipated, and in a different way.

There was an amateur concert at the Manor, the last entertainment of the kind that season. A brilliant company were assembled; but the affair requires no particular description.

The usual excitement, disappointments, jealousies, and so forth, had preceded it, but one circumstance did call forth especial remark.

Herbert and Augusta both possessed what, in "society"—from that of the tap-room to that of Kentish Town—no higher—is called "a voice."

They were, so far, in unison—had often sung duets—accompanied one another—she singing, he playing, each in a manner which only was not all melody, if, on the young lady's part, at any rate, all was sweetness, perhaps a little over refined.

This night they did not sing together.

"You used to charm us by your duets with Mr. Leaholme," said the parson of the parish, a gentleman with a well-watered brain.

"I never sing now," answered Augusta.

Among the flowers, among the marble and golden vases, beneath the arches that opened from purple into white saloons, Herbert sought the lady of the festival. Everywhere, she eluded him.

At length—but now, it may be remembered, he has not been personally introduced.

It would be absurd to say of Evelyn that she looked like an empress, a queen, or a princess, or anything of that kind, because there are only three of the class in Europe worth looking at on mere account of beauty, while, to say that Herbert was kinglike would be to insult him, since, the German Emperor excepted, there is not a man among them who would be worth his portrait—that Bavarian fiddler reminding you, irresistibly, of a wax imposture at Madame Tussaud's, which has been overboiled in the process of conversion from the semblance of a convict into the ape of a king.

Herbert Leaholme was simply a typical young Englishman, with a tinge of Venetian descent in his features, of about the Raffaele height, a candid brow, clear, thoughtful eyes, a slightly wavering mouth, which sometimes smiled when he was least intent on smiling, and a carriage which rose in an instant from suavity to haughtiness, should his slightest susceptibility be touched.

Distinctly, he resembled no king living, any more than did Evelyn any queen, excepting Her of Love, whom Shelley has portrayed.

They met, Augusta and Herbert, and Augusta seeing him approach, turned directly away, and was so lost in a conversation with one of her

young guests on musical topics, that she did not even notice the presence of her "brother-friend."

A great opera had just been produced, and was the theme of all idiotry for the time.

"I thought," said the silly girl, entering into the jargon of those around her, "that his affet-uoso was too marked—too—I don't know what."

"And I fancied her *apiacimento* a little studied," replied her lovely and languid listener.

"But the cadenza was beautiful, you will admit," drawled a young gentleman who had not heard a single note of the whole performance.

"Too calando," a third.

"Too calmato," a fourth.

Which slang might have gone on into a Hotten's dictionary had not a straight appeal been made to the courtesy of Miss Augusta Fairleigh.

"Miss Fairleigh, you promised to show me a rare flower, brought to you from India—does it flourish in this climate?"

"In an artificial 'atmosphere,'" she replied.

"All things false do. Will you see it?"

"The false thing in the artificial atmosphere? Yes, Miss Fairleigh, with your permission. But no—not if the heated air will make you faint."

"I am faint enough already. Mr. Leaholme, I have a word to speak, and let it be the last."

They went together into the conservatory, glass-domed, redolent of Indian lilies, lotus-bright, hot with colours from all the brightest regions of the earth, soft with every delicate perfume, "from silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon," and rich with the incense of beauty.

She let the purple partiére fall.

"I have a word for you," she said.

"And I for you—many," he answered.

"Mine for you is the easiest spoken," she went on. "No, Herbert," as he endeavoured to take her hand, "this must not be."

"Dear Augusta, why have we been estranged. I had hoped—"

"Do not speak to me of your hopes. You yourself have ruined them."

"Is it impossible to appease you? I declare—"

"Declare nothing. From this moment do not come here. Go now, at once. False to me, false to yourself. I cannot, I will not, Herbert Leaholme, endure the reproach of your companionship."

"Augusta, I have come to ask you—"

"What?"

There was a curl upon her beautiful lips which sorely tempted him.

"To be my friend, to forgive me, and obtain forgiveness for me. Ah, Augusta, there was a time—"

"A time which you have chosen to forget. Herbert, let there be an end of this. I did love you—"

"You loved me?"

"As my brother. Yet now—"

"Why not now? Augusta, my sister, we have both done a bitter wrong—to Evelyn, your friend and my betrothed. For this I ask your aid; for this I have sought you. We have, together, wrought an injustice. Let us, together, undo it. We have accused Evelyn of a crime against her father; worse, almost, than the crime which was committed beneath his roof—of murdering his name, not less foully than he is believed to have foully murdered his guest. We were wrong;—say you think so, Augusta."

This time there was no need of temptation.

Fearless of "Society's eye," she kissed him.

"Now, you are once more my brother," she said. "I was afraid you loved me."

"So I do," he said, pledging himself to that assurance in a manner not necessary to dwell upon, though its significance was intelligible enough.

"Never again will I harbour for an instant the thought that my pure and beautiful, my darling and blessed Evelyn could attempt to cast obloquy upon her father's name. Never!"

At that instant, like a sudden wind upon a sea, like the bursting of an unexpected breeze

over a field of corn, like a dart of lightning across a clear sky, ran a shudder and a murmur from room to room.

Men held their breath, women grew pale, young girls clustered together, as if some terrible presence had made itself manifest among them.

The rumour floated, and appalled every mind when it became a truth.

Sir Norman Hedley had been arrested for the murder of his guest, Henry Mainwaring, upon a warrant granted at the instigation of his own daughter!

The glance which Augusta Fairleigh gave to Herbert Leaholme and which Herbert Leaholme gave back to Augusta Fairleigh, may not be described.

CHAPTER XV.

Imagine her as one in dead of night
From forth dull sleep by dreadful fancy waking.
LUCRECE.

EVELYN HEDLEY had gone to her retreat, had fled to her home in Norman Chase.

No one was there.

She and her faithful old servant were the sole tenants of that enormous mansion.

All its wealth, all the dignity and opulence it represented would come to her by right.

"Unless,"—and what a doubt lay in that word—"unless something happened which she would not permit herself to imagine.

For the echoes of a dark and deadly night were still whispering in her memory.

"We will have no lights, nurse," she said, "that can be seen from the outside. My rooms, you remember, look upon the inner court."

"But the whole house must be searched," remarked her faithful confidant.

"That can be done by daylight."

"Perhaps so, my dear," was the answer, and Martha Page turned her face away.

There was something singular in her voice as she uttered those simple words.

"Why do you speak so, nurse? What is it you are thinking of? Why not make our search by daylight?"

"Because there may be more to be discovered by night than by day, in the old house of Norman Chase."

"You know something; you have seen something; you suspect something. Tell me, Martha, who is it? What is it?"

"It is wise to wait," answered the woman, whose habits of speech were sententious.

They entered the Chase at night-time, when, to quote the classic Lord Lytton:

"Nobody was about."

Then they kindled a fire in the deserted chamber, and sat down—trespassers in that which would be the inheritance of the one, and had been the birthplace of the other.

Evelyn told to her old nurse the story of the lockets.

Also her other griefs.

"It is a prophecy more than half fulfilled," was the laconic commentary.

"How? Why?"

"Youth"—you are pining it away. "Beauty"—of what avail is it to you now? "Hope"—of what? "Love"—you are trampling it beneath your feet, my darling."

Saying which, this soft-hearted Martha Page took to her bosom the nursing of many years ago, and cherished her as she would have cherished an only child.

Evelyn said nothing in reply. What was it possible to say?

Presently, however, she spoke:

"Let us go over the place at once."

"Now? No; you are too tired; to-morrow."

"Now," responded Evelyn in a tone admitting of no dissuasion.

What was it she expected to find?

What black secrets were to be told to her in those tenantless chambers?

What whispers of the darkness were to construe her own or her father's fate?

"We will begin here. It is not for the first time," Evelyn said, somewhat hoarsely. "In this room Henry Mainwaring, my father's friend and guest, was murdered."

They searched in vain. Nothing, save by a few indistinct footsteps in the dust of the fatal chamber, dishonoured by a secret crime, had been disturbed since the officers of the law had left it.

There was nothing further, it appeared, to seek in this direction.

"He was strangled?" inquired Martha Page.

"Yes, and the cord—one of Indian manufacture—has disappeared."

"I was in India, as you know, for many years. An ayah—an Indian nurse, as you may have heard—came home in the same ship with Sir Norman. What became of her?"

"I never heard. But what is this I feel?"

They were sitting alone, that evening, long after the last crimson of the sunset had died away in the waters of the pool.

"Something is going to happen," Evelyn said, as if to herself.

Her companion looked at her with surprise. "What makes you think so?" she asked.

"Let us go over the house again," was the abrupt reply.

They did, and whether from the effect of Evelyn's words, or the nervousness they had created in the mind of Martha Page, or the sultry stillness of the night, a sense of fear appeared to grow and become more oppressive as their feet, as it were, involuntarily advanced. At last, poor Martha Page, unable any longer to endure the dreadful apathy, spoke:

"Silent as the grave—more silent, for graves sometimes have voices."

"This is a grave," was Evelyn's answer.

"Hush! I heard a noise."

"And I saw something."

"What did you hear?"

"What did you see?"

There was something, both to see and to hear.

Far away from them, at the turn of a long, curving corridor, shone upon the wall a wavering panel of light, and from the same direction came a sound, as of retreating footsteps.

"Let us go back," the woman urged, in a frightened tone. "It is a robber."

"Robbers don't light fires. Besides, what are we here for? You said we should find out more by night than by day. I will go alone if you will not go with me."

Terror, perhaps, rather than courage, kept her companion at her side, and together they cautiously approached the point whence the light appeared to come.

There was a door opening into a richly furnished chamber.

Within, notwithstanding the warmth of the season, a fire was burning brightly.

"Someone is here, whether he knows of our presence or not," said Evelyn. "We are upon the track of the secret. What is to be done?"

"Wait, as I told you, my dear. Watch him, but be more quiet than a mouse."

"I will be a dormouse while I wait and watch, dear nurse," answered the young girl, her face kindling with an evil fire, "but a panther when I spring. For here lies the secret of Henry Mainwaring's murder, and of my father's innocence."

Night after night, they hovered stealthily about that illuminated room, but never saw anyone.

This emboldened them to enter it. Nothing could be discovered to, in any way, help their purpose. But there is a proverb that all things come to those who are patient.

They had lingered until long after midnight, in a niched corner of the passage, when a door at the opposite end of the lighted room opened, and they saw—

Mathew Drake!

He took a lamp from a side-table, and passed out as quickly and quietly as he had entered.

"We will follow him," Evelyn whispered.

"He may kill us. See, he carries a pistol."

And now they both remembered that they were utterly defenceless should this man discover them and attempt violence.

But Evelyn was not to be dissuaded. The man came back, crossed the room, still carrying the lamp, and looked about him.

"A rat," he muttered, and went as he had come.

They followed him down a long passage into a sort of disused chapel, containing a number of those rare and curious cedar chests in which the Venetians delighted.

Some were full of papers, others had been emptied, and their contents lay strewn upon the floor. Mathew Drake knelt down and examined document after document with careful scrutiny. The watchers heard one word which was very like an oath, coupled with a name which was very like "Evelyn."

"But that I love her," the man then said, aloud, "and that she is necessary to me, I would put an end to this at once. Now to work."

They saw him draw from one of the chests, more modern in appearance than the others, several skins of parchment, fastened together by a brass rivet, with which he left the place, omitting to close the door.

"Shall we stay here, or still follow him?" whispered Martha Page.

"Follow him," answered Evelyn, in the same tone, but with a fierceness of expression and look that might have qualified her to wear the robe and bear the sword of Judith; "he carries the mystery with him."

"Stay! He has left something on the table—a paper."

There it lay—a sheet of white paper, simply inscribed with the words:

"Visit this room again, and the hand which silenced Henry Mainwaring will silence you!"

"The tale is told," said Evelyn, desperately controlling her emotion. "But no; it cannot be. This was not written just now. See; it is gummed to the board, and we have never been in the place before. Come; we must not miss him."

A far flicker of the lamp guided them upon the footsteps of the midnight walker, who went his way with all the mechanical celerity of a somnambulist.

He returned to the room which contained the fire.

The woman and the young girl were unwearyingly at his heels, more than ever wondering at his movements.

Which, indeed, were now becoming more extraordinary than ever.

First, he laid on the ponderous Gothic table of thick, solid oak, a large, square stone, with a polished surface.

Then he took from a small iron box a number of steel instruments, variously shaped; next a variety of quaintly-formed bottles, labelled, as it seemed, in cypher.

M. Etudes himself could scarcely have possessed a more singular collection.

Evidently the studies of Mr. Mathew Drake were of the most erudite kind.

He laid open before him the uppermost sheet of parchment.

He took another, perfectly blank, with which he compared the first, ascertaining its equality in size to the fraction of an inch.

Satisfied upon this point, he held both skins up to an intensified light, and, this being done, sat himself down with a self-satisfied leer, and began to copy from the one upon the other.

They saw him pause, and heard him, as he lounged back in his easy-chair, say, looking up to the ceiling:

"Evelyn." It is a lovely name. And she is a lovely creature. If this does not give her to me, nothing can."

The young girl drew her companion away, and was silent until they had reached their own room.

"Thank heaven!" she then exclaimed, "for in another moment I might have stabbed the wretch with one of his forger's tools."

Had Herbert Leaholme seen her now? He would have loved her more than ever.

Morally she was Cordelia in the forest, Imogene in the cave, the daughter of Jephthah, Virginia dying in her father's arms.

That night had been a revelation.

A little more light and she would lay bare her suspicions. But they were suspicions only. What had she to tell?

"Is it safe to stay here?" asked Martha Page, the next morning.

"Safer for us than for him," was Evelyn's answer. "I shall find what I want in the armoury. We will go there to-night."

"For what?"

"For my father's pistols, which he brought from India."

"Surely you are not—"

"I am going to defend myself, if that villain attacks me," said Evelyn. And now, listen. I have a new plan."

New! It was, perhaps, the most extraordinary that ever entered into the human imagination.

"After visiting the armoury we will visit the portrait-gallery," were Evelyn's concluding words. "What to you think of the idea?"

There was no reply. The woman sat gazing at her foster-child in mute amazement.

CHAPTER XVI.

Love that well which thou must leave ere long.
SHAKESPEARE, SONNET 73.

When that dreadful rumour had passed from lip to lip in the halls of Fairleigh Manor, Augusta and Herbert Leaholme, as if by tacit agreement, made no reference to it, and the party, so to speak, broke itself up, the guests departing, like those at Macbeth's banquet, without respect for precedence.

Augusta and her chaperone were left alone, amid the gilded luxury of a scene over which so strange a shadow had passed.

"You were talking, rather confidentially, with old Lady Mountcastle," said the elderly widow, laying a somewhat unnecessary stress upon the epithet.

"Yes; she is going to present me. I am going up to London with her for that purpose," replied Augusta.

"She!" exclaimed the exasperated lady. "And why not I?"

"She offered to do it, and you did not," answered Augusta, who was secretly glad not to run the gauntlet of criticism in company with a personage so sure to create astonishment as her gorgeous relative, who would infallibly descend upon society in a cloud of purple and gold, hoisting an ostrich plume above her three-decked turban.

Few young girls can wear court costume, and not suffer for it. Augusta, in her favourite dress of white china crape and blue silk, soft and brilliant at the same time, looked the beauty that she was.

Augusta, with a train of gold-coloured silk, a jewelled belt, a Princess Charlotte feather, and gloves up to her elbows, with an egregious fan to match them, looked the dowdy which she was not.

That old Palace of St. James, nooked in the corner of apark, is familiar to most people. Its red brick walls, stunted colonnades, long and narrow corridors, low-roofed state-apartments, and old-fashioned splendours, giving a title to the English Court, have for that reason been preferred to the more vast and vulgar saloons incongruously bearing the name of Buckingham.

Under this roof was Augusta Fairleigh first introduced to the world of state and fashion. It bewildered her. She passed before the royal presence as in a dream.

There was an alarming crush upon the stairs, as there always is, to the disgrace of English palace manners.

No such scene would have been possible at the Tuileries in the days of the Empire, or at Schönbrunn, now.

Skirts were torn away; spurs entangled in sweeping trains, plumes knocked off, feet trodden upon, jewels lost, notwithstanding all that ushers, pages, and officers of the Guard could do with a view to separating the two streams of incomers and outgoers.

In the midst of this confusion Augusta lost her chaperone.

She regained the carriage, but Lady Mountcastle was nowhere to be seen, and the civic regulations did not permit of her waiting.

The carriage turned out of the park into the common thoroughfare.

In about half an hour it stopped and the door was opened.

"This is not Berkeley Square," said Augusta. "I said Hay-hill, Berkeley Square."

But to her astonishment she saw that it was not Lady Mountcastle's servant.

"A lady—a young lady—is waiting to see you, Miss—Miss Evelyn, daughter of the baronet who murdered the gentleman from India. She sent us to wait for you."

Now Augusta Fairleigh resembled Evelyn Hadley in some respects.

She was no dreamer of dreams. She had no belief in English Uddolophes.

The roar of the great city was audible, and she quickly made up her mind.

There was mischief of some kind intended, and she would run any risk rather than fall into a secret trap.

"I will get down, then," she simply answered, stepping out of the vehicle, and turning, as if to look about her. "But where is this?"

Then, with a sudden dart, she eluded the man, and uttering one long, shrill, piercing cry, fled from his attempt to grasp her.

In her superb costume, with the gems still sparkling amid her hair, her satin-shod feet plunging into the mire, Augusta Fairleigh ran, as if for life, when the way was stopped by a lofty iron gate.

She was in that old Inn-of-Court of which mention has been made, and in which Mr. Mathew Drake and his legal ally had concocted their nice little conspiracy, the one to obtain Evelyn's hand and inheritance, the other to possess himself of Augusta and her fortune.

In that instant the crisis of this young girl's life arrived.

The ruffian in pursuit was flung back along the pavement by a pair of arms that certainly were not wanting in muscle, and a quiet, respectful voice asked:

"Was that man insulting you, young lady? Are you here against your will? Can I help you?"

It was a gentleman in military uniform, over which he wore a dark cloak—a young man, of high-bred appearance and manner, but who, it was obvious, could not resist a slight look of astonishment at seeing a beautiful girl, alone, in such a place, in such an attire. Suddenly, however, he said, bending forward:

"It is impossible I should be deceived. You were at the Palace to-day. You nearly fainted, and I caught you just in time. I am Lady Mountcastle's nephew, and saw her home. She was terribly anxious, and I must take you to her. Is that your carriage?"

"No. I will not ride in it again."

"Mine is waiting. I will follow in a cabriolet."

"By no means. Lady Mountcastle's nephew, who has protected me from insult, will only complete his claim upon my gratitude by escorting me home."

(To be Continued.)

ALLIGATORS AND CROCODILES.

THE difference between a crocodile and an alligator is thus set forth by one who evidently knows whereof he speaks: "I know the alligator as I know buffalo, and the Nile saurian is no more like the South American alligator than a subsidised bargain-hunting missionary is like a sincere Christian. The reptiles before us were from fifteen to eighteen feet long, sandy-yellow in colour, not at all black, thicker and shorter in the head than the alligator, and so supple and lithe as to turn themselves almost double when alarmed, with the ease of an acrobat. The alligator when turning moves the entire body.

The Nile crocodile is always a dangerous antagonist. The alligator in Southern swamps is, at best, sport for convalescents in Florida and boys.

Even in his native element the alligator will flee at the approach of man, whereas I am told by native hunters here that in the water the crocodile invariably attacks, deeming itself its mightiest inhabitant."

CONVICTED.

CHAPTER LVIII.

PIERRE and his brother Jean pursued their search for Mr. Strange in the chapel.

The dark lantern was made light and its rays were flashed in every direction—into the lofty pulpit, the enclosed family pew, and even into the passage below leading to the crypt—but all in vain.

"We've made a thorough search," said the valet, disappointedly. "He's either in the grounds, or among the rocks of the bluff, or he has taken refuge in the mysterious 'Cavalier's Refuge,' which is somewhere near this chapel. He is said to have the secret of that hidden chamber, blight him! I wonder where it is!"

"You have no clue to it?"

"None whatever. I've amused myself often enough by looking for it, and have not more than half believed in its existence. But if it does exist, he has taken possession of it. I'll tell you what I'll do. I've hung off about warning the police in order to give my lord a chance to win Lady Vivian Clyffe. She's as coy as a bird. What she wants to drive her into the marquis's arms is the shock of this felon's capture by the police. She's a proud lady, and would gladly marry my lord in that case, and go off to the Continent out of the excitement and scandal. I've a mind to give his lordship an unexpected lift in his love affair. I'll telegraph to Scotland Yard to-morrow. It's sure hanging, without a second trial, if this felon's re-captured. And you and I'd share the reward, Jean. It's a handsome one, worth our consideration," and the valet's eyes sparkled greedily.

"If we don't capture him ourselves to-night," suggested Jean Renaud. "The Scotland Yard people wouldn't take hold of the girl's murder, eh?"

"Murder? Why, they'll swear she fell off by accident, and censure the marquis for not having a balustrade on the edge of the bluff. There's no sign upon her of how she met her death. I'm too cunning, Jean Renaud, to do a thing awkwardly. I'll bring this matter to a head, and claim half the reward."

His greediness was a leading characteristic with Mr. Pierre Renaud.

"If you haven't scared him off for the night, Jean," he continued, "he'll be upon the terrace, or outside the ruins, in the course of an hour, to meet his daughter. Come outside, and we'll lie in wait for him!"

They went again into the outer air.

Wilson had kept close upon their track, hearing now and then scraps of their conversation. He hid himself behind an angle of the wall to await events, his curiosity wrought up to the highest pitch.

"You must be silent as death, Jean," said the valet, when they had settled themselves in a safe obscurity. "There must be no baulk this time, if he shows himself!"

When Alex Strange awoke to life and consciousness, with a feeble moan upon her white lips, her father was bending over her in an anxiety too great for words.

She recognised him, in spite of his dyed complexion and hair, and murmured his name softly, her eyelids drooping again to her pallid cheeks. Again, as a faintness seemed to paralyse her senses, her father summoned her back to consciousness by his efforts for her recovery.

"Papa!" she whispered, her sapphire eyes roving in a wild glance about her. "Papa! Is it really you?"

"It is I, Alex. Tell me where you are hurt. I can find no broken bones, no terrible injuries. Are you hurt internally? Try to breathe a long, full breath, my child—so."

Alex obeyed, drawing a full inspiration without pain.

"I think I am only bruised, papa," she said. "I remember it all now. Someone pushed me off the bluff. I thought I was dying. How did you save me? I could almost think that I am dead, and that we are in the other world," and again she looked around her.

She was lying upon a pile of soft mattresses and blankets upon the floor.

Around her were grim stone walls, without a window or visible crevice for the admission of air.

A lighted lantern hung upon a projecting stone. It was evident that this was a subterranean chamber.

It was spacious, and fitted up with some attempt at comfort.

A wooden bench, an easy-chair, and a cupboard comprised the sole furniture, but the latter article was filled with edibles, cold meats, patties, cakes, and loaves of bread, in variety.

Alex noticed all these things, and then her gaze settled upon her father.

His grand and noble face was haggard and worn.

He seemed to have kept long vigils of late, and to be exhausted with agonies and conflicts. His eyes, blue as sapphires, were sunken deep under his wide brows, and there were lines upon his visage that Alex had never seen there before.

She listened while he explained her rescue. She made an effort to rise, and sank back again, weak as an infant, her head giddy, her body trembling.

"Where are we?" she asked.

"In the Cavalier's Retreat. I brought you here, not knowing where else to take you. I have been here in hiding for over a fortnight. Lie still, Alex. There is a cut upon your head which I must bandage."

He brought cold water and applied it to the wound, and tied a pocket-handkerchief over it. Then he brought her a glass of wine, which he procured from his cupboard.

Alex drank the potion, and felt new strength and warmth pervading her system.

She was still unable to rise, and lay back upon her pillow, her eyes fixed upon his face in tender and loving devotion.

"If you had not found me, papa," she said, presently, "I should have rolled off the ledge when I began to revive, and so have been killed. The man who sought to murder me must have been Pierre Renaud."

"He was Pierre Renaud!"

"And how strange it was that you heard my scream and came to save me."

"I have visited the terrace every night for a week in the hope of seeing you, Alex. I have been out sometimes early and sometimes late, but until to-night have caught no glimpse of you. I began to fear lest you had quitted the castle."

"I was gone three days upon a journey to London with Mrs. Ingestre. But tell me, papa, how did you obtain this bed and all that food," asked the girl, wonderingly.

"I effected an entrance into the castle one night through the scullery window, which had been left unfastened," said Mr. Strange. "I made my way up to a guest chamber and brought away the blankets. A second and a third visit on the same night procured me the mattresses. A visit to the larder then, and once or twice since, by means of the same window, which is out of order, has obtained me food and drink. I have spent my days here, my nights out of doors. I was in the ruined chapel, unseen, upon the night of Lord Mountheron's dinner party, when the ruins were illuminated. I saw and heard my—Lady Vivian, although she could not have suspected my near presence." And Mr. Strange sighed heavily.

Alex caressed his hand softly. How wan and sorrowful he looked—like one who has drank the cup of human woe to the very dregs, and who now waits only for death.

"Poor papa!" said Alex, gently. "How much you have suffered since we left Greece!"

Her father smiled, a smile so sorrowful as to be more full of pathos than tears.

"Where is she now?" asked Mr. Strange.

"Lady Vivian."

"In London, papa. She will return to Clyffe-bourne next week."

"Return?"

"Yes, papa. And without guests."

"And Rowland Ingestre, Lord Mountheron? He is in London, too?"

"Yes, papa. He follows her like a shadow, and when she returns to Clyffe-bourne he will come back to Mount Heron."

"The marriage will take place soon?"

"Within a month, Mrs. Ingestre says. But, papa—ah, do not groan like that!—Lady Vivian does not love Lord Mountheron; she never loved him. She told me so herself. She has thought of marrying him, it is true, and has promised to be his wife only upon one condition—that he should clear your name and bring the murderer of my uncle to justice."

"I know. I heard her say it. She loves me still, she has never doubted me and never ceased to love me. I heard her tell Ingestre that. I heard her say that she would gladly share my wanderings; she would forsake home, honours—everything for me; that the divorce was not of her seeking, and that she would follow me into exile, if she might."

"Oh, matchless love, that survives prosperity, honour, all that the world esteems! Oh, Alex, we have been all wrong in coming to England! When I believed Vivian scornful and full of hatred toward me, I could bear my lot better than now. I loved her so well that so long as I believed her happy I could bear my own jealous anguish."

"But to know her loving, to see that she has suffered in our separation, that she has wept for me, that she has had sleepless nights and torturing days, that my agonies have been equalled by hers—oh, Heaven! Why am I so cruelly wronged? Why has my life been wrecked for the crime of another?"

He covered his face with his hands.

Alex could only reply to him with caresses.

"Am I trying you too much?" asked the father, hoarsely, a little later. "My brave little girl, you meant all for the best. Papa can never tell you how much he loves and honours you for your noble, fearless love and faith that for him braved all things, dared all things, even death!"

He drew her to him, raining kisses upon the wounded head and the little quivering face, white as any snowdrift.

"Try your strength, darling," he said. "Tell me if you are better!"

Alex made an effort to rise.

"I ache all over," she said, sinking back again, "but no bones are broken, dear papa. I shall soon be myself again."

"Thank Heaven for this one mercy. I realise the perils you have incurred for my sake, Alex, and I bless you with a father's tenderest blessing. Noblest, best, most devoted of daughters, who gave up her lover for the sake of her father, may Heaven bless you even as I do. And though we part soon here and for ever, may we meet in heaven, where all wrongs are righted, and where the secrets of all hearts are made known."

"Papa, what do you mean?"

"I have sought you many nights to tell you this, Alex. I see how deeply I have erred. When the stain of dishonour fell upon my name, when I became an outcast and a fugitive, I had no right to involve another life with mine. I believed your mother had become my enemy. That divorce cut me to the soul. I took you from her to comfort my exile; but for your love I should have gone mad. But your mother had a greater right to you than I, Alex, but I can give her back her child."

"And what will you do?"

"Exile myself to some remote quarter of the globe, or, better still, hasten to the East and join in the approaching wars and find a soldier's death."

Alex uttered a cry of grief.

"I cannot give myself up to the laws of my country, for your dear sake and that of your mother. I cannot bear the shame of death upon the gallows, but in the thick of battle I will fall with nameless others, and none will suspect that so perished the man who was believed, even by those who had been his friends and known him best, to be the worst criminal of his times!"

Alex sprang upright upon her couch, forgetting her wounds and bruises. Her lovely sapphire eyes shone like stars. Her face was glorious in her young enthusiasm.

"Papa, where you go, I shall go!" she exclaimed. "Your fate shall be mine! I will never leave you—never—not even to go to my mother, whom I have learned to love. She believes me dead; she does not need me as you need me!"

"But if I command you, my child?"

The father's voice, while tender still, had a tone of authority in it. He had made up his mind to give up his child to her mother, and his purpose was not to be shaken.

Alex dropped on her knees beside him, clinging to him with both her slender arms.

"Dear papa," she exclaimed, "in any case, I will never leave you! Hear me! It may not be necessary for you to flee from England. The Lord's mercy is infinite. His justice never dies. You have suffered for many years this awful wrong, but you cannot so suffer for ever. Already the light is breaking through the darkness—the light of your approaching vindication."

Mr. Strange staggered back, white and incredulous. He had borne sorrow too long to believe that joy was in store for him.

"Has your fall to-night made you delirious?" he asked.

"Sit down by me and listen," said Alex, drawing him to a seat upon the couch and placing herself beside him. "My journey to England has not been all in vain, dear papa."

The patient calm, the stony impassiveness of his haggard face was not stirred. He did not believe that there was ground for hope that he would ever be restored to honour and freedom.

"Oh, papa, I am sure that all will come out right yet, that you and Lady Vivian will marry, and be the happiest couple in all the world, that you will be Marquis of Mountheron—"

Her father gripped her arm tightly, but unconsciously, his features writhing in agony.

"Don't!" he said, huskily. "I cannot bear it!"

"I believe Pierre Renaud to be the murderer of my uncle, and I have obtained proofs of his guilt."

"Proofs?"

"Proofs that have convinced Mr. Dalton, the rector of the parish, and your old tutor, of Renaud's guilt, and of your innocence."

"That have convinced Mr. Dalton? He believed me guilty. He adjured me to confess to him the story of my supposed crime. And he is convinced of my innocence? Oh, Heaven be thanked!" And Mr. Strange dropped upon his knees, and wept as Alex had never in all her life seen any man weep. "Give me the proofs, Alex."

Alex told of Renaud's visit to the crypt under the ancient chapel, and of her espionage; of the diamonds there concealed, which jewels she believed to be a portion of the valuable missing collection of the murdered marquis.

"A strong proof against Renaud," said her father, more calmly, realising its importance.

"And you told Dalton? You did not reveal to him your identity, nor the fact that I am still alive?"

"No, papa. I kept my secrets well. But I have more to tell you. The chamber of the murdered marquis had never been opened since the inquest. I induced the butler and Mrs. Matthews to open it for me. And in a crevice

of the carving of the ancient bedstead of the marquis I found a bit of gold watch-guard, which had been wrenched from the murderer's person, evidently, in that fatal conflict."

Alex told of her visit to London and to Lady Vivian, of her return, and of finding the watch-guard from which the piece had been torn, in the jewel-case of Pierre Renaud.

"Another proof!" said Mr. Strange, less calmly than before. "And you told Dalton of that?"

"Yes, papa. And there is more to come."

She told of her visit to Gregg, the miller, of her rescue of his child, and of her subsequent interview with him.

Mr. Strange's agitation increased at every word.

"Mr. Dalton has placed a detective on the track of Pierre Renaud," added Alex, "and this detective is now at the castle, disguised as a servant. He has also placed a watch upon the miller. These men are in a net which is closing around them. The truth will come out, papa!"

"And if it does I shall owe life and everything to you!" cried her father, embracing her. "But these men are cunning. The detective may watch you as well as your enemy. I cannot think that right and justice are to triumph after so many years. And, notwithstanding all this encouragement," he added, gloomily, "I feel a strange horror upon me. There is trouble ahead for me. Heaven grant that this horror may not be the forerunner of discovery and arrest!"

CHAPTER LIX.

THE interview between the father and daughter, in the hidden Cavalier's Retreat, was prolonged several hours.

Mr. Strange, with a hopefulness to which for eighteen years he had been a stranger, had promised to wait in his present concealment a few days longer, in the expectation of future developments favourable to his cause.

His project of restoring his daughter to her mother, and seeking death in foreign wars, was left in abeyance.

So much had been done toward clearing up the mystery that had darkened his life, that it might be, he thought, that the Lord had heard his prayers at last and was about to right the frightful wrong that had branded his innocent brows with the brand of Cain, and that had made him an outcast and a wanderer upon the face of the earth.

His brother's blood that had cried out to heaven all these years for vengeance might perhaps at last be avenged; his desolate hearth might glow again with his household fires; his empty heart might be filled; his wife restored to him; all that he held dear, love, honour, reputation, home, rank, might be given back to him to crown with glory his later years.

Yet he scarcely dared believe all this actually possible. At times the brooding horror to which he had alluded lay heavily upon his soul.

It was hard to believe that the unrighteous judgment that had blighted his life could ever be reversed.

He had carefully and tenderly ministered to his daughter, bathing and dressing the wound upon her head, and assisting her to recover her strength.

She was still weak and trembling, bruised and aching, but a few hours' rest would greatly help to restore her.

When Alex's discoveries had been gone over at length, and every point dwelt upon, and weighed at its just value, when Mr. Strange had made inquiries after Lady Vivian and Mr. Dalton, scarcely able to comprehend that the latter had been fully convinced of his innocence, the girl glanced at her watch. It was past one o'clock.

"You must go now," said her father, arising from his seat at her side. "You need rest, darling. I will go with you to the castle."

"But the doors are locked. How shall I get in?"

"At the scullery window, as I did several times. You know how to find your way upstairs, I suppose?"

"Yes, papa. You need sleep as well as I do, and I will go. Do not come with me. Only let me out, and direct me, and I can find my way."

Mr. Strange insisted upon accompanying her. Alex's heart sank at the prospect of meeting her ruthless enemy the next day. What evil scheme would he perpetrate next? He had determined to destroy her; a return to the castle was like an entrance into a lion's den.

Her father read her thoughts and shared her fears.

"You must not go upon the terrace again at night," he said. "If you have something of importance to communicate to me, write a letter in Greek, and put it in the carving on the inner side of the reading-desk of the high pulpit of the ancient chapel. I will look there every night for some token from you. Do not go out of doors alone. Keep near to Mrs. Ingestre when within the castle, and have one of the maids sleep in your room, as a safeguard at night. You will do all this, Alex?"

The girl promised.

"There is one thing more," said Mr. Strange, pacing the hidden chamber with nervous tread. "It may be that I am to be cleared of this long agony and shame. It may be that I am to be arrested and—no, not that! It may be that I shall escape from England and die honourably. I cannot guess what my future is to be, but I feel that a crisis is at hand. For many reasons—principally that if I am to perish, you must be taken into your mother's keeping, and because her presence may be a refuge to you—I wish you to write to her in the morning, and beg her to come down to Clyffe-bourne without delay."

"But, papa, she would be here next week, in any case. And what reason could I give for hastening her return? I am only her hired companion; she would wonder at my audacity. And what could I say to her on her arrival—if she should come?"

Mr. Strange continued to pace the floor restlessly.

"I don't know what to answer," he acknowledged. "But she has shown affection for you; her mother-instinct, unknown to herself, will excuse your seeming audacity. And you might confide to her that Pierre Renaud has attempted your life repeatedly because you had engaged in the work of attempting to clear the name of Lord Stratford Heron. Yes, is it! You betray nothing—not yourself nor me—but you enlist her protection and sympathy by that reference to the husband of her youth. Tell her of all your discoveries—the watch-guard in Renaud's possession, the miller's admissions, and your suspicions against him. Let her consult with Mr. Dalton. You can tell her all this without betraying your identity, my child."

"I will write to her in the morning," said Alex.

"And now I will take you to the castle," said Mr. Strange. "Be very careful, my own darling; I shall be continually anxious about you. When Lady Vivian returns, place yourself under her care. Go to Clyffe-bourne as soon as she comes."

"But, in that case, I cannot communicate with you?" urged the girl.

"I will come to Clyffe-bourne as before, every evening. I can easily do so. The Clyffe-bourne grounds are not watched, and there are recesses in the cliff in which I can find temporary refuge, if needed. You can do nothing more at the castle, and you will be safer at Clyffe-bourne!"

Alex assented, promising obedience to his wishes, and arose also.

Her father took her in his arms and blessed her, with an infinite tenderness and yearning, and with a solemnity that would have befitted a final parting on earth.

Indeed, he thought that this might be a last farewell; that he might never see her again.

That brooding horror had settled darkly upon his soul: his near future might witness his awful and ignominious death.

He kissed her; he dropped tears upon the uplifted young face, so pale and wan with its great woe and anxiety, and then he gently released her.

"Whatever happens to me, my child—if we should be separated—I beg you to be to your dear and honoured mother all that you have been to me," he said. "But come!"

He went to one side of the chamber, which presented an apparently unbroken wall of rough stone.

A pressure upon some skillfully-hidden spring caused a large square block to move slowly aside.

Through the aperture thus revealed, Mr. Strange crept cautiously.

He extended his hand, and Alex followed him upon her hands and knees through a small, tunnel-like passage some four feet in length, and protected upon its outer side by a block of stone moved similarly to the other.

Alex emerged into the dim ancient chapel, in its quietest recess, a narrow space behind the lofty carved pulpit.

The stone revolved at her father's touch slowly into its proper place, and not the keenest eye by the brightest light could have detected that the wall was not perfectly solid.

The pair listened for a few moments in deathly silence, and Mr. Strange then led the way down the dim aisle through the thick gloom, to the door opening into the ruins. It swung noiselessly at his touch.

Father and daughter glided like shadows into the outer spaces, enclosed by their high walls of masonry, with high, arched windows, half-veiled with ivy, giving a view of the paler darkness outside.

Mr. Strange conducted Alex through a pointed door-way, the massive door of which was ajar, into the courtyard, and they stole swiftly and silently in the direction of the castle offices, arriving at the window of the scullery. It proved to be still out of repair, and readily yielded to the intruder's touch.

"I will go back to my retreat immediately, Alex," said her father, in a whisper. "The household has retired, and your enemy also. You have nothing to fear to-night. Do not forget to write to Lady Vivian the first thing in the morning, and on her arrival go to Clyffe-bourne."

He pushed up the window as quietly as possible, and secured it in position. Then, lifting the slight form of his daughter, he put her inside the scullery, waited until she had vanished into the kitchens beyond, and then softly lowered the sash.

He waited five minutes—ten minutes—fifteen minutes.

No sound came from within, and Alex did not return.

"She is safely in her own room," he said to himself, drawing a long breath. "No harm can come to her to-night; that villain believes her dead."

He returned slowly, and almost noiselessly, in the direction of the ancient chapel. The stable-clock struck the hour of two as he fitted across the courtyard.

(To be Continued.)

DELIGHTS OF MARRIED LIFE.

BEHOLD him! all the while he is busied about daily occupation, his thoughts are wandering towards the time of going "home" in the evening, after the fatigues and toils of the day. He knows that, on his return, he shall find an affectionate face to welcome him—a warm, snug room, a bright fire, a clean hearth, the tea-things laid, the sofa wheeled round on the rug—and, in a few minutes after his entrance, his wife sitting by his side, consoling him in his vexations, aiding him in his plans for the future, or participating in his joys, and smiling upon him for the good news he may have brought

home; his children climbing on the cushion at his feet, leaning over his knees with joyous eagerness that they may coaxingly win him. This is the acme of happiness!

SINNED AGAINST: NOT SINNING.

CHAPTER XLVII.

All things come round to him who will but wait.
GERMAN PROVERB.

MR. VINCENT felt in an unaccountable state of perturbation.

Ulrica's manner had been, as he thought, inviting and decidedly prepossessing, and now, lo! all of a sudden he felt instinctively that it had become repulsive.

It was, unfortunately, too late for him to retract his words and his intentions, for the mail-train was speeding along as fast as ever it could go.

Swiftly the thoughts flashed through Ulrica Warner's active mind.

Here she was alone with this man and that fatal leaf of the register in the travelling-bag beside her.

At first she thought—actually (!): Should she confess she had a motive—she could not tell what—in wishing to become possessor of the evidence of the marriage?

Second thoughts said: "No." And she trusted to her ordinary diplomacy to get her out of this scrape.

"Miss Warner—my dear Miss Warner!" the rector commenced, taking the seat beside her, "I am afraid," he continued, apprehensively, "that you are not quite fit to take this journey. It is too much for your strength."

Ulrica languidly opened her eyes and looked furtively at Mr. Vincent's face.

There was nothing in the expression to make her fear that he was about to say anything unpleasant.

Yet Ulrica feared. Her guilty conscience, indeed, held her in thrall.

"No," she replied. "I feel rather shaken," which was about the truest thing she had said for some time past, for she really did occasionally feel giddy from the effects of the shock. "I lay for so long insensible that I yet feel as though I were going to faint every minute," and Ulrica again closed her eyes.

This was the very thing the rector apprehended and feared.

What on earth was he to do with her if she were going to faint?

His sister was not troubled with nerves, and to his sister he generally referred in his mind as a model of the ways of women.

"You don't think there's any danger of your fainting?" he said, suggestively and timidly.

"I hope not."

Ulrica saw her advantage, and determined to pursue it.

Perhaps kind Fate would be good enough to intervene and to induce Mr. Vincent to leave her in quiet.

"But you know," she continued, "I am naturally anxious to go on to my father."

"Naturally! How is he? Have you had any news since?"

"Yes, I had a telegram this afternoon. He is in much the same state as he was when I left Brentwood."

"Did your friends know what train you were to come by? If so, they must have been rather alarmed about you."

"No, I don't think they did. But as soon as ever I recovered I telegraphed to the doctor to let him know the cause of my delay."

"I never got such a shock as when I saw it in the paper this morning. Of course they could not give your name, as you were unconscious at the time."

"What did they say? I have not seen any paper with any account of the accident."

Ulrica really felt curious upon the matter, and thus led up to the very subject she would otherwise have carefully avoided.

"They described you, saying, also—really, a most curious fact, Miss Warner, and one which I should like to have satisfactorily explained—they said that amongst the contents of your travelling-bag was the ink-stained page of what, I believe, from the description given, of a parish register. Now, Miss Warner, could that document be by any possibility the missing page of my register? It is a most important point to clear up."

So it had come at last! and had come, moreover, in a way in which she never would—or could—have suspected.

But despite her abject fear—for Ulrica Warner well knew how terrible would be the penalty were her crime discovered and punished—and notwithstanding her having been taken so utterly unawares, yet her half-dazed brain had not lost its wonted cunning.

"What!" she ejaculated, in well-dissembled astonishment, as she laid her well-fitted, little grey-gloved hand upon the rector's arm.

It made his pulses beat quicker, and he felt inclined to believe anything this woman might say.

"I really cannot quite comprehend what you mean, Mr. Vincent. I never saw the document in question in my life."

"Don't agitate yourself, my dear Miss Warner—don't agitate yourself." (The rector, at this stage of the proceedings, took the pretty little hand in his.) "Of course, you would not know anything about it, or you would have said so; but it is an extraordinary proceeding altogether, and I feel sure you can clear it up."

Mr. Vincent pressed Ulrica's hand as he reluctantly released it and looked admiringly at it.

Ulrica knew she dared not open her travelling-bag and invite an inspection of its contents, for there was the paper.

But was it the right paper after all that she had in the bag?

A wild, sickening hope rushed across her mind, for mark, gentle reader, what had happened.

In her bedroom at the rectory Ulrica had burned a paper.

It was not until she was putting away her papers hurriedly the next day that she discovered she had—as she thought then—burnt the paper of entries which she had made, and unfortunately retained the leaf from the register.

In her despair she grasped at even the shadow of the shadow of a hope.

Could it be within the bounds of possibility that she had burnt the right paper after all?

The paper upon which her entries had been made had been some old, ruled, bluish paper which Mr. Vincent had given her in the vestry.

Both the torn-out leaf of the register and the paper in question were much of the same size, both had been deplorably ink-stained, and she had only been able furtively to look at the page which she had retained.

And now this vague doubt and hope flashed across her scheming, plotting mind.

Oh! if she could only surreptitiously open her travelling-bag and get a look at the document, and set her mind at rest so far!

Ulrica gave a deep sigh, and closed her eyes.

Mr. Vincent looked alarmed, and again took her hand in his.

She gave another sigh, and Mr. Vincent pressed the little hand he held and became seriously alarmed.

"My dear Miss Warner, do you feel faint?"

A faint pressure of the hand and another sigh was the only response.

"Rest yourself," soothingly spoken; "now, rest yourself, and don't talk. It has been very inconsiderate of me to allow you to exert your voice in the railway carriage, considering your weak state—very inconsiderate indeed."

Again Ulrica gave the rector an answering pressure of the hand, and, opening her eyes languidly, gave him a look which sent the blood rushing tumultuously through his every vein.

"There now, my dear Miss Warner, be calm

—be calm, my dear, and let me take care of you."

The rector actually felt himself blushing. This was the nearest approach to love-making which had ever occurred to ruffle the serenity of his decorous and irreproachable life.

For, good reader, despite this amiable little weakness for Ulrica Warner, the good rector of Brentwood was of the salt of the earth.

He was one of the patient, unselfish ones of the earth, who quietly and uncomplainingly plod on from year's end to year's end—expecting no reward in this world—looking for no personal gratification as the result of all their labours.

In early life he had supported two aged and ailing parents, and after their deaths three sisters.

One had died, another was married, and the other yet lived with him.

Many a time and oft he had wished for

These darling divinities,
Love-worshipped children and wife,

but for the sake of others he had put away all a man's natural thoughts, trampling out all thoughts of passion and love, and trying to lead the life, pure and undefiled, which he honestly and faithfully preached to his flock by word and deed.

Such was the guileless, unselfish, simple-minded man whom Ulrica Warner had caught in her toils.

She wanted to gain time to think how she could get a look at the paper in her travelling-bag, and she knew she could not do so more effectually than by feigning faintness.

She saw Mr. Vincent was in abject terror of her fainting, and felt sure he would make any concession rather than see her come to that state.

So she allowed him to retain her limp, passive hand.

Presently—whisper it not within hearing of the Midas-like ears of Dame Propriety—but Mr. Vincent laid his other hand upon Ulrica's, which he softly clasped between them.

A railway-carriage is not by any means the most convenient place in the world in which to make love; shouting detracts from the sentiment of the matter.

There is no doubt a great deal can be done by looks, but these were powerless in Mr. Vincent's case, for Ulrica sat with her eyes closed.

"Miss Warner, my dear Miss Warner—"

And Mr. Vincent felt hot and cold by turns all over as he tried to screw up his courage.

But faint heart never yet won fair lady, and he determined to try his chance if Ulrica would only vouchsafe ever so little encouragement.

"Yes," she replied, opening her eyes, and—oh! cruelty—withdrawing her hand. "I think we are coming to a station."

This matter-of-fact speech was rather a damper to the rector's ardour.

"I think so," he said. "The train is slackening speed."

A bright thought occurred to Ulrica.

Leaning forward so as to bring her beaming glances full on the rector's face they revived his drooping courage.

"When we stop at the next station would it be too much trouble for you to try and get a glass of water for me?"

"Trouble, my dear Miss Warner? You must not speak of such a thing. Nothing I could do for you could be anything but a pleasure. I only trust we may have time enough to procure the water."

Ulrica gained part of her point, for Mr. Vincent moved away to the other end of the carriage to be in readiness to ask the guard how long the train would stop at the station.

Ulrica opened her travelling-bag hoping against hope that she might have been unnecessarily uneasy all this time.

Her trembling hands could scarcely hold the bag whilst she turned over the contents.

There were the papers.

She unfolded them one by one.

Yes. There was the fatal ink-stained page with the entries upon it.

Ulrica nearly fainted with joy.

She had actually burnt the real page, and this was only the paper with the copies from the register upon it.

She closed the bag, and lay back almost overcome with joy.

"Only three minutes, sir, to wait here," said the guard, in reply to Mr. Vincent's question. "Impossible to get a glass of water or anything, sir. All right!"

And the guard waved his flag, and the train again dashed on.

"Oh, never mind! I'll take the will for the deed, Mr. Vincent." (How sweetly amiable she looked!) "I feel much better; but what is this you were telling me about the leaf of your parish register being found?"

She felt she could now lead up to the subject with impunity.

"I said I hoped it had been found. That the description of the paper found in your travelling-bag seemed to me to answer to the description of it."

"Here is my bag," replied Ulrica, carelessly; "let us look over the contents. I am sure I only hope some fortunate accident has been the means of the leaf being put into it, but I assure you I know nothing about it."

She opened the bag.

The rector held it open whilst she turned over the contents.

"Here is the only piece of paper at all like what has been described," he said, as Ulrica put the paper with the entries obtrusively forward.

"That must have been what they meant," she replied, calmly.

"Yes—yes! Assuredly," said Mr. Vincent; "but I confess I am rather disappointed. I really should have liked to have had some clue as to what became of that page."

"It is most provoking."

Ulrica was quietly arranging the articles in her bag as she spoke.

Mr. Vincent had taken the piece of paper in his hand, and was idly looking over the entries, and thinking what a fine masculine hand Ulrica wrote.

Suddenly he gave an exclamation, and Ulrica looked up.

"Why! why! why! What's this? I can't be mistaken in the names. One of them was rather peculiar. Why, my dear Miss Warner, here is the copy of the marriage certificate of Preston Rivers and Margaret Ogle!"

Outwitted!

But how?

CHAPTER XLVIII.

She had so many reasons wherefore
And so many reasons therefore.

SWIFT.

ULRICA WARNER's heart stood still for one brief moment.

What did the man mean?

Was Mr. Vincent mad?

The marriage certificate of Preston Rivers and Margaret Ogle upon that piece of paper?

The thing was impossible.

So she told herself in miserable, conscious self-deception.

Her head swam.

The whole carriage seemed to turn topsy-turvy.

She forgot every sense of discretion in her wild desire to possess herself of the paper. She was very nearly flinging herself upon the rector like some wild beast and tearing the paper from his hand.

But even in the midst of her terror reason—her customary calm, cold reason—stepped in, and Ulrica Warner, although with difficulty, restrained herself.

For once in her life Ulrica was at a loss for an excuse.

That she must account for the names being on the paper she knew right well. But how was she to do so?

First: How had they come there?

The whole thing suddenly flashed upon Ulrica's mind, and she inwardly and forcibly anathema-

tised herself for her carelessness, so very much in opposition to her customary and exceedingly cautious behaviour.

She remembered that she had hurriedly written down the copy of the register.

But then, she reflected, that was not exactly what she wanted to do.

She wanted to destroy the register altogether!

So she had, in her haste, forgotten the paper of entries.

And here it was brought up in judgment before her.

How she hated it!

And how she loathed the rector as he sat there looking from the paper to her, and from her to the paper, in sheer bewilderment!

She must deny it.

Such was the predominant feeling in Ulrica Warner's brain as she sat there, her nervous hands tightly clasped one over the other in her sheer endeavour to keep quiet.

Some excuse must be made.

She fully realised that, but what could the excuse be?

"My dear Miss Warner," pursued the rector, in his most mildly-amazed manner, "I cannot understand this at all? Here is the very marriage certificate that we have all been in such trouble at not being able to find."

"How can that be?" (Ulrica was preternaturally quiet and seemingly much uninterested in the whole affair.) "How can that be, Mr. Vincent, for that paper contains merely some notes which I copied from the parish register?"

"Exactly, my dear Miss Warner, exactly," exclaimed the rector, "and here is a copy of the marriage certificate which we are in search of."

"The thing is past my comprehension."

Ulrica sat calmly looking out of the window. To look at the woman not one would have guessed of the raging storm within.

No lightnings from her eyes betrayed the clouds which were swirling over her soul.

"And past mine, I honestly avow, my dear young lady," returned Mr. Vincent, perplexedly turning the paper over and over, and again slowly reading it. "Yet here are the very names that poor man—Mr. Garthside, you know—gave me, as wanting the certificate of their marriage. Indeed," he continued, with what seemed to Ulrica maddening prolixity, as he fumbled in his pocket and drew forth a small memorandum book, "I believe I have the names written down here."

Ulrica became sick through sheer terror.

Everything seemed against her.

Even her customary sharp wits appeared to have become blunted, for no way out of the dilemma presented itself to her mind.

"Yes," continued Mr. Vincent, in a pleased and excited tone, "here is the very thing. Yes, I was right. The names are the same. Dear me—dear me—Miss Warner! This is a very extraordinary thing altogether."

No. Ulrica's shrewdness had not quite deserted her.

As the rector spoke an excuse presented itself to her mind.

"Why, how absurd of me not to have thought of this before," she exclaimed, in a deprecatory tone. "Of course, I remember it all now; but my head has been so stunned that I really felt too confused to think clearly upon any subject. I'll tell you how it was, Mr. Vincent," she continued, leaning forward, and putting her hand on the rector's arm. "When I heard the story from Mr. Garthside the whole thing struck me as being an incident which I might eventually work up in a novel, so in order not to forget it I wrote it all down with the real names. Of course, that is how it all happened."

The rector turned the paper over and over in his hands and looked critically at it.

To Ulrica Warner's secret horror, she thought—nay, she felt sure—she detected a look of suspicion upon his face.

"But the accident to the paper—the spilling of the ink, I mean—took place the night before Mr. Garthside came to Brentwood, and this appears to have been written before then."

As the rector spoke he folded the paper, and



[THE COPY OF THE REGISTER.]

retained it between his clasped hands. Ulrica Warner's soul sank within her.

She was nearly at the end of her resources.

Nothing now was left but for her to deny the matter out and out, or to stick to her last assertion in the face of any opposition or disagreeable pressure which might be brought to bear upon her.

"It may appear so, Mr. Vincent," she replied, but with much less self-possession than usual, "but I assure you what I state is the fact. I invariably put down any out-of-the-way occurrence which I may hear of for the purpose of using it up again. Moreover," and the wary Ulrica almost betrayed her tactics by speaking a little testily, "I cannot understand how anyone could tell whether it was written before or after the ink was spilled."

Mr. Vincent was silent, a circumstance which Ulrica did not like.

He sat with the folded paper in his hands and his eyes vacantly looking at the landscape which was apparently whirling past them.

"True—true!" he mechanically assented, still keeping his eyes fixed upon the landscape. "Everyone is liable to make mistakes."

Ulrica felt relieved at the words, but there was yet something in the tone in which they were uttered which she did not quite like.

"Yes," she replied, wishing to lead the conversation to generalities. "We are all liable to make mistakes."

"Nevertheless, Miss Warner," said the rector, "there has been a certain amount of publicity given to the fact of the torn leaf of the register having been found in your travelling-bag. I must therefore ask you to give me this document."

"Why is it necessary that I should do so?"

Ulrica Warner was determined not to give it if she possibly could help doing so.

"Because some of my parishioners might come to know about the missing leaf, and I may as well be able to tell what I can about it."

"There is no need that they should know anything of the kind."

Ulrica, in her hasty anger, spoke unthinkingly

in a short, sharp manner, which was not lost upon the rector.

"But I have every reason to think the matter has been well-ventilated all over the parish."

"How?"

"Why, by Keith, the sexton. Indeed, my dear Miss Warner, I don't mind telling you that after I parted from him it struck me that his manner was somewhat—somewhat"—the rector cast about in his mind for a word which he considered applicable—"well, somewhat strange and suspicious."

"Why should it be so?"

Ulrica Warner, like many another in the world, probed her heart and conscience in her desire to hear fully all she wished to become acquainted with.

"I am sure I do not know, but I only know that such struck me. I did not like Keith's manner—not at all—not by any means!" he continued, emphatically. "No, indeed—I did not like Keith's manner."

Having given utterance to his feelings in this manner, the rector relapsed into silence.

There was no help for it.

Ulrica Warner saw that already Mr. Vincent had some crudely floating ideas in his brain that there was some mystery attached to the disappearance of the leaf from the register.

And—most horrible and most annoying, and should there be any disturbance, most damning thought of any—she felt sure Mr. Vincent had a lurking doubt in his mind that she was not altogether blameless in the affair.

His manner, too, had changed within the brief time which had elapsed.

Instead of the semi-lover-like rector, Ulrica Warner felt there was a man beside her who conscientiously, much as he might regret it, felt that between her and him some great gulf had opened.

The rector could not have given the idea words, but he felt the very same thing.

"What was there in Keith's manner that you objected to, Mr. Vincent?" Ulrica was determined to probe the matter as far as she

possibly could, even at any sacrifice to her feelings and to her dignity.

She reflected that it would be better for her to do so, when there was no possibility of anyone being by to listen, than with probable prying ears around.

"I cannot define it, my dear Miss Warner, I really cannot define it? I can only say," the rector felt certain qualms of conscience telling him that he had prevaricated, and wished to stick as nearly to the truth as possible. "I can only say," he repeated "that there was something about Keith's manner that I did not like."

More than that, Ulrica felt confident she could not gather from Mr. Vincent; and her angry soul raged and surged with disappointment.

She almost, nay, she actually hated the good man who sat there, bitterly disappointed at something, he knew not what, in her.

"I am sure your word is quite sufficient in the parish, Mr. Vincent," said Ulrica, sweetly; "no one would pay any attention to what your sexton would say, were you in a position to contradict it."

"I trust my word has very considerable weight in my parish," he replied, quietly. "I should be much grieved and disappointed were it otherwise. At the same time, my dear Miss Warner, you must recognise as well as I do, that there have been grounds for this report, inasmuch as this paper has been found in your travelling bag, and the fact made public. Therefore, you cannot have any objection, I am sure, to my keeping this piece of paper?"

"Oh, dear, no," at the same time, Ulrica feels she could stab the rector, had she the chance.

He quietly puts the paper into his pocket-book; and as he does so, the train begins to slacken its speed, and in a very minutes they were drawn up alongside the station which was their destination.

(To be Continued.)



[INTO THE TRAP.]

THE LORD OF STRATHMERE; OR, THE HIDDEN CRIME.

CHAPTER XXXV.

They harkened, in their rapt desire,
To what his lips would let fall.

MISS PELHAM'S delight at seeing Dr. Marsh was evident. After some preliminary conversation, he made known to her the object of his visit.

"I am just come from Mr. Crowl's room," said Miss Pelham. "His wife, who is my maid, has been joining with me in urging upon him the necessity of confession. He has been very ill and is greatly broken in spirit. Our suspicions of the governor, doctor, are well founded. Mr. Crowl has told me enough to convince me that Lord Strathmere was his uncle's murderer. But in order to clear the innocent and bring the guilty to justice we must have absolute proofs. And how shall we obtain such proofs as cannot fail to secure the desired result? Will Crowl's evidence be sufficient?"

"That remains to be seen. His reception here and treatment by the governor would be corroborative evidence, I suppose. Take me up to his room, Miss Pelham. I am anxious to see and question him."

Miss Pelham complied, conducting the old doctor up to Crowl's chamber.

The invalid was lying in bed, pallid to ghastliness, with eyes full of terror and anxiety, his mind evidently wrought up to the highest pitch of anguish and remorse.

Meg was bending over him, pleading with him to disclose his knowledge of the Strathmere murder.

The Rev. Mr. Alston, the rector of the church attended by the governor, a clergyman of influence and character, as well as of the most godly life, was still kneeling by the bedside.

Col. Gurney stood in the background. Miss Pelham had sent for him and the rector as soon as she had heard of Crowl's illness, had confided to them, under promise of secrecy, the story of her lover, and had implored them to appeal to Crowl to do Chandos justice.

Mr. Alston and the colonel had responded nobly to Miss Pelham's demand upon them, although not comprehending its full import, and not knowing who would be involved by our hero's justification.

It may be imagined that Thomas Crowl was not a promising subject for the good rector to work upon.

But he was weakened, both in body and mind, by his terrible illness.

As he stood at the very portals of death, all his hardness and recklessness fell from him. Like many men who have always been physically strong, he had a great terror of death, and in the very presence of the grim king of terrors he sank down frightened and trembling.

Other attacks had been made upon his life, but they had been clumsy and had been futile. He had even laughed at them.

He had of late believed himself perfectly secure from their repetition.

But now that he had so nearly fallen a victim to Lord Strathmere's treachery, he felt, with his terror of death, a desire to avenge himself upon the baron.

Miss Pelham and Dr. Marsh entered the room and stood at the foot of the bed.

Crowl's gaze wandered to them, and back to the mild, benignant face of the clergyman.

"If you know aught that will tend to clear the unfortunate young man, Chandos," said the old rector, solemnly, fixing his eyes upon the invalid, "I conjure you, in the name of the Almighty, before whose bar of judgment you must one day appear, declare the truth now, as you shall then hope for mercy!"

Crowl's lips quivered; his features worked with emotion.

He had been bad and reckless; he had often scoffed at religion, but down deep in his soul lingered a faith in the justice of Heaven.

His old father had been a pious man, and had brought him up strictly.

His old father's teachings, the prayers he had heard in his boyhood in the old parish church at Strathmere village, came back to him now.

His weakness, his terror, and his desire for revenge upon Lord Strathmere, his remorse and an rush, all combined to make him yield to the influences brought to bear upon him.

"Tell the truth, man," said Colonel Gurney, "and we will all try to protect you. You won't be punished if you turn king's evidence."

"Tell the truth, Tom," whispered Meg. "If you had seen the young master to-day, as I did, you could not wrong him by further silence."

Crowl's gaze wandered from one to the other of the little group.

"I had the story all written out once," he said, feebly, "and in the hands of a notary; but he was robbed of his papers one night, and the next day was sent away upon some unimportant mission. I wrote it out again and put the paper in Meg's hands. She has it now, and I wonder how he dared poison me with that paper in existence. I told him that there was a confession in safe hands."

"I put it in my box," interrupted Meg. "This morning I saw that Susan Priggs, the housemaid, coming out of my room with a sneaking look on her face, and I suspected she'd been stealing something. I examined my things. My box had been opened with false keys, and Tom's confession was gone."

"Gone!" gasped Crowl. "That explains the poisoning. He thought to get me out of the way, paper and all. I will tell the truth. I will bring him to justice. Mr. Ralph Chandos was innocent of Lord Strathmere's murder. I'll tell you all before that Evil One comes in to

finish up his work. Have you got pen and paper?"

Miss Pelham answered in the affirmative, placing both before the rector.

Meg hastened to lock the door.

"Now write down what I shall dictate," said Crowl, faintly. "It was the night of Lord Strathmere's murder. I had come up to Strathmere village to see my poor old father. He had appealed to me for money and a visit. I could give him the latter, although not the former, having barely funds enough to pay my passage third-class from London. What to do I did not know; but I was determined to help him. I had been a gambler, a confidence-man, and a worthless fellow generally, but I had never got into the hands of the law. I knew that the old Lord of Strathmere was rich and miserly, that he had money, jewels, and silver plate, and that he kept a safe in his bed-chamber. The Evil One tempted me to rob him. Have you got all that down, Mr. Alston?"

The rector assented. Meg moistened Crowl's lips with a little water.

After a brief pause to rest, he continued, slowly and feebly, detailing how he had burglariously entered the mansion of Strathmere Park, how he had made his way to the old lord's chamber, the location of which he had known, and how he had concealed himself in a closet. He described the baron's entrance to his room with his valet, the deepening of the night, his fears, his creeping forth to secure his booty, and the sound of the stealthy step in the corridor.

He told how he fled to the armoire, and secreted himself therein, how he had witnessed the entrance of Norman Brabazon, how Brabazon had approached the bed and bent over the aged sleeper, and how he had suddenly stabbed the old lord to the heart.

He described his own stupefaction, Brabazon's retreat, and his following the villain to his own room.

Then he told of the bargain he had made with Brabazon to keep silence, and the occurrences that followed, even to the attacks upon his life in Sydney.

"Have you got it all written?" he asked, in conclusion.

"All," answered Mr. Alston, in a voice that betrayed how deeply the narrative had shocked him. "And this Norman Brabazon is—"

"Now Lord Strathmere, and Governor-General of New South Wales," declared Crowl, firmly. "I swear, before the Almighty, that I have told the truth. Let me sign the paper."

He did so, the others appending their signatures as witnesses.

"Mr. Alston will please keep the paper," said Meg. "I can add my testimony, which may be worth something. I knew how desperate Tom was, and I followed him to Strathmere Park that night, and waited for him outside. When he came down the ivy from the upper window and landed beside me, I touched him. He started and looked so scared and white that I declared he looked like one who had committed murder. Then, under my oath of secrecy, he told me everything as he has now told you. And he promised me if anyone was likely to be hanged for Brabazon's crime, he would save them by declaring the truth!"

"This is certainly corroborative testimony," said Dr. Marsh.

"But—but it all seems incredible!" said the rector, in a tone indicative of bewilderment. "They accuse a nobleman of unblemished reputation, of seemingly spotless life, a man of high position."

"Chandos had a yet more unblemished reputation," interposed the old doctor.

"I cannot give perfect credence to the story," said Mr. Alston. "I do not believe an English jury would convict Lord Strathmere upon this evidence. I will keep the confession carefully, but I should not be willing to appear in any case against the governor unless further testimony against him were obtained."

Miss Pelham's face paled. She had hoped so much from Crowl's confession, and had believed

that it would ameliorate her lover's condition at once.

"I should think that Lord Strathmere might be arrested upon the strength of Crowl's testimony," said Miss Pelham.

The clergyman shook his head.

"The governor is supreme here," he declared, "and any complaints of him must be sent to headquarters—to England. This man, Thomas Crowl, by his own admission, is proven to have been dissipated and lawless. I own his words stagger me. And yet I would not convict Lord Strathmere upon them, if the case rested with me. Other testimony is absolutely necessary to convict him."

"But how can that testimony be obtained?" asked Dr. Marsh, hopelessly. "No eye save that of Crowl saw him commit the crime, except the All-Seeing One. Conviction is then, impossible!"

Miss Pelham's lovely face lighted up with a radiance that bespoke an inspiration.

"I know," she exclaimed. "We must obtain the evidence from Lord Strathmere himself. Crowl must entrap him into admissions, which we must overhear. If he acknowledges his own guilt, that will be enough to condemn him in any court in the world!"

"We shall find him too wary for that, I fear," said Dr. Marsh. "He is not a man to commit himself!"

"He has done it—he may do it again," said Crowl.

The rector folded the confession and carefully deposited it in an inner pocket of his coat.

He could scarcely doubt the sincerity and truthfulness of Crowl, and yet the story seemed to him wild and preposterous, even as it seemed to Col. Gurney.

He was not willing to take any responsibility in bringing home the crime of the old baron's murder to the present Baron Strathmere.

"If new and corroborative evidence can be obtained, I shall be willing to act in this matter," said the rector, "but not otherwise. The case is very serious. Lord Strathmere's position is too exalted to permit him to be lightly assailed. I shall keep this matter secret until more light can be thrown upon it."

He arose to go.

At the same moment, Meg started up, cresting her head, in a listening attitude.

"Lord Strathmere's step!" she whispered.

"He is coming here. Our opportunity may have come. Conceal yourselves and listen!"

Miss Pelham gave the rector no time for consideration.

She caught his arm and hurried him into an adjoining closet.

Dr. Marsh followed, seizing upon Col. Gurney.

The four had scarcely thus secreted themselves, the clergyman and the officer too bewildered to protest, when a knock was heard upon Crowl's door.

Meg unlocked it, and Lord Strathmere advanced into the chamber.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

What purpose I hold will fail;
The lamp I have trimmed glimmers dim.

The governor had borne suspense as long as he was able.

He was anxious to learn if his agency in Crowl's illness were suspected by his victim, and had finally determined to visit the man boldly, with an appearance of friendly interest, and judge of his bodily condition and his state of mind for himself.

As he entered the room he looked about sharply, with his habitual caution. The writing-materials had been hastily removed by Meg. The light was dim, and he did not see that the closet door was ajar.

He detected no presence save that of Meg and the invalid, and a gleam of satisfaction appeared in his hard black eyes.

He approached the bed, schooling his visage

to an appropriate expression of sympathy and concern.

"Why, what is this?" he asked. "You are ill, Crowl? What is the matter, my poor fellow? You looked well enough an hour or two ago."

Crowl replied by a look of indignation, that declared plainly his knowledge of the baron's treachery, but he did not trust his voice in speech.

His lordship changed colour.

He wondered if Crowl had revealed his suspicions to anyone. He turned to Meg, and demanded:

"What are you doing here, my good girl? This is no place for you. You had better attend upon your mistress."

"I have as much right here as anybody, and considerably more too, my lord," retorted Meg, flushing. "I am Thomas Crowl's wife, married to him the very day after I arrived in Sydney."

"His wife?" repeated the governor, rather relieved than otherwise at the discovery of the relationship between the pair. "Then you are imposing upon Miss Pelham? Why have you concealed the fact of your marriage?"

"We have kept our marriage a secret expecting Tom to come into possession of considerable money, my lord," said Meg. "And then we intended to leave Sydney. We never expected this would happen. And if he shouldn't live—"

She put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Why, I thought the doctor said he was out of danger," said Lord Strathmere.

"So he did, but Tom's that weak that I'm afraid," said Meg. "He has been very near death, anyhow."

"Leave me alone with him a little while," said the governor. "I want to talk with him. Run away, Meg; I will summon you when I leave."

The woman shook her head. She had a lively terror of Lord Strathmere, and feared that, if left alone with Crowl, he would complete the work he had begun.

"Go, Meg," said Crowl, feebly. "I want to see the governor as badly as he wants to see me. I have something of importance to say to him. You can wait in the hall. You'll be out of ordinary earshot there, but could hear me if I screamed for help."

Lord Strathmere scowled hideously.

Meg went out reluctantly, closing the door after her.

The governor crept after her, assuring himself that she had not placed herself at the key-hole to listen.

He then returned to the bedside.

"You seem to have been very ill, Crowl," he observed, looking down upon the ghastly face of his confederate, and cursing his ill luck in that the man still lived. "One of the servants told me you had a fit of apoplexy. You will have to be careful after this."

"Don't play the hypocrite to me, Norman Brabazon!" exclaimed Crowl, in a louder, firmer voice than he had before employed, and which distinctly penetrated, as Lord Strathmere's tones had done, to the ears of the breathless listeners. "You know that I had no fit of apoplexy."

"No? What was the matter, then?"

"It was the poison you gave me in that accursed brandy. You meant to destroy me. You expected that I would drop dead, once I was out of your presence. Oh, you schemer! You wretched assassin. If people had their deserts you'd be hanged this very minute higher than Haman!"

"If you waste your energy in this fashion," said the governor, coolly, "I wouldn't give much for your chance of survival. You poor idiot, why should I kill you?"

"To stop my tongue. I know too much."

The black eyes of Lord Strathmere gleamed with a murderous light. If Meg had not been in the hall on guard her worst fears would have found prompt realisation at that instant.

"Money closes people's mouth as effectually as death does," said his lordship. "I don't need to kill you, Crowl. Have you said any

such rot to anyone? Did you tell the doctor that I tried to kill you?"

"Yes, I did," answered Crowl, doggedly.

"You did?"

"But he wouldn't believe me. I am nobody, beside the great Lord Strathmere," cried Crowl, bitterly. "I could hang you, if my testimony would be taken; but I don't suppose it would. A common, low fellow like me couldn't be allowed to swear away the life of a peer of the English realm. I don't believe any jury on earth would convict the noble Baron Strathmere of murder on my testimony."

"You are right there, but you needn't howl the fact in that manner. I am glad that you are beginning to realise your own littleness."

"This isn't the first time you have tried to murder me, Lord Strathmere," said Crowl, with rising passion. "You nearly fixed me this time. The confession I gave Meg to keep as my safeguard has been stolen out of her trunk. I own you're too sharp for me. All I want now is to get away from you and from Sydney."

"Pity you hadn't come to that resolution before. You chose to follow me out to Australia, to blackmail and hound me, and you see what you've got by it. You have learned a good lesson in learning to fear me, Thomas Crowl. You deserved killing. You have forced your society upon me, have put yourself in my path, have intruded into my drawing-room, have caused remarks among my friends, have made me an object of suspicion, and if you don't clear out of Sydney I'll kill you! There you have it—just what I mean—you black-livered scoundrel!"

"I only wish I had Meg to hear your threats. I'll leave Sydney to-morrow, if you'll pay me the thousand a year I demand. If you'll settle it fair and square on me, I mean, so that your heirs will have to pay it in event of your death!"

"I won't do it. To make such a settlement would excite comment I cannot bear. What excuse can I make for such a settlement? To do that would be to proclaim myself in your power."

"Do you mean to defy me?"

"I might defy you, but I am willing to treat you well. I will give you a thousand pounds down to-morrow, if you will leave Sydney, and I will give you my verbal promise to send you a like amount every year while I live. This I can do secretly—more I cannot and will not do!"

"If you refuse my terms, I'll blow the whole thing!" exclaimed Crowl. "I'll tell how I happened to be at Strathmere Park that night, and how I saw you murder your old uncle in cold blood. I'll proclaim the innocence of Ralph Chandos! I'll write to the Home Government!"

"Bah! Who would believe you? Your presence at the Park that night as a burglar would not be greatly to your credit. I would declare that it was you who committed the murder."

"Then Chandos would be freed, and would become Lord of Strathmere, while you would be again poor Norman Brabazon!"

"Come, come, Crowl, we can't afford to quarrel. I am in your power, but you are also in mine. You saw me commit the murder for which Chandos suffers, but your interests as well as mine lie in your silence. The testimony of a self-acknowledged burglar would not go far against me. You might have made yourself necessary to me, but you preferred to act as master, and that I couldn't stand. You had better accept my terms. You know that I am a dangerous man, and that I will sell my life dearly. I will protect myself at all hazards. Understand that. You had better accept my offer."

"I shall hold out for the annuity."

"You will never get it. I won't imperil my neck to appease your demands. You have my ultimatum."

Crowl appeared to reflect.

"I may accept your offer," he said, after a little silence, "provided you double it. You may not live many years, and if my annuity stops

with your life it behoves me to make hay while the sun shines. Give me two thousand pounds to-morrow, and the same amount yearly, and—I'll talk the matter over with Meg."

"She knows everything, then?"

"Everything. She is my wife, you know. Besides, I had to tell her the truth that night, else she would have suspected me of the murder."

"You demand a fortune, but I will give it. Talk the matter over with your wife, if you wish. I know she will advise you to give in. I tell you, Crowl, you'll be liable to these little attacks as long as you stay in Sydney," said the baron, significantly. "As to all you can say or do against me, I am too powerful to fear you. You'd better be wise in time!"

"I intend to be. You won't poison me again," groaned Crowl. "Get your money ready, Brabazon. I shall leave Government House to-morrow."

"The money will be ready. I need not advise you to keep a still tongue, Crowl. You know me well enough to know that talk will ruin you. You will have to take back what you said to Dr. West. I'll send for him in the morning, and you must explain that your mind was wandering when you made such a preposterous charge against me. I hope we understand each other."

He bestowed a look of menace upon his confederate, and moved slowly towards the door.

"Ah," he said, "one word more. If you were tempted to betray me, Crowl, you would have to acknowledge yourself as accessory to the murder. You let an innocent man be punished, and if I had to swing, the same gallows would be required for you!"

He opened the door abruptly.

Meg stood at some distance, quite out of ear-shot.

It was clear that she had not been listening. He beckoned to her, and strode away, descending the stair.

Meg came in hurriedly and locked the door.

"Well?" she cried, excitedly. "Did you succeed? Did he betray himself?"

The closet door was flung open, and the four listeners, all overwhelmed with excitement, came forth.

The horror of Mr. Alston and Col. Gurney was equalled only by the joy and satisfaction of Miss Pelham and Dr. Marsh.

"Such an awful depth of depravity!" sighed Mr. Alston, sinking down into the nearest chair.

"It is enough to shake one's belief in human nature!" cried Col. Gurney. "An English peer, the governor of a great colony—the thing is too monstrous for belief, and yet his guilt is beyond all possibility of doubt. He has owned it in the plainest terms."

"I thank Heaven!" cried Gerda Pelham, raising her eyes reverently. "I believe in His goodness and justice! Oh, we have done well to trust in Him through all. My poor Ralph, my poor wronged boy—"

"He must be saved—not a minute must be lost in our effort to rescue him!" exclaimed Dr. Marsh. "A ship sails for England to-day. We have time to send a letter. Yet I dare not trust the mails in a case so precious. I will go myself!"

"You?"

"I! Mr. Alston, Col. Gurney, make out the proper documents. You, Mr. Alston, are, fortunately, a magistrate. I will go to England—to the throne itself, if necessary—for justice. I will stir up all Britain. I have many influential friends—"

"And so have I," declared Col. Gurney. "I will give you letters to them, and they will assist you materially. Poor young Chandos must be rescued without delay. You will do well to go to England yourself, doctor."

No time was lost in drawing up the statement that the undersigned—the Rev. James Alston, Col. Gurney, Dr. Marsh, Thomas Crowl, and Gerda Pelham—had heard Lord Strathmere confess that he had murdered his uncle, the late baron, in cold blood, and that the conviction of Ralph Chandos had been an injustice and a wrong.

The conversation between Crowl and the governor was written down, with the particulars that had led to it. The entire statement was then duly signed and sworn to by each of the five signers.

Dr. Marsh then hurried away, leaving Government House without encountering its incumbent.

He found Dr. West at home, sent a man to engage his passage on the "Britain," informed his friend of what had occurred, and made hurried preparations for departure. A cab was summoned, and the two surgeons drove rapidly down to Sydney Cove.

The vessel had not yet weighed anchor, but her hour of departure was near at hand. Dr. Marsh had been fortunate enough to secure a good berth, and he settled his effects in it and ascended to the deck.

Almost at the last minute Col. Gurney and Mr. Alston came aboard with the important despatch, duly attested, and with letters and other documents for the doctor.

They waited in close conversation with him until they were ordered ashore, and then stood in a group with Dr. West, watching the ship move slowly out of the cove.

"She's off!" said Col. Gurney. "We must preserve a dead silence on this matter until we hear from England. I have cautioned Miss Pelham and the Crowls, and I am sure of their discretion."

"Crowl must be removed from Government House to-night," said Dr. West. "Dr. Marsh was not fit to undertake the voyage," he added, anxiously. "Someone ought to have accompanied him; but it is now too late. Everything depends upon him, and he is feeble. May the Lord watch over him, and bring him safely to his journey's end!"

"If he prospers," said Mr. Alston, "we cannot hear from him for months. During that period, exposed to the merciless hatred of that fiend incarnate, what will become of Ralph Chandos? If any help comes it will probably come too late."

Thomas Crowl quitted Government House upon the evening of the day upon which he had made his confession, and without again seeing Lord Strathmere, or even acquainting him with his intended departure.

Upon reflection, Dr. West, who had taken the fellow in charge, holding himself responsible for his safety and safe-keeping, decided not to take him to his own house, being especially fearful of awakening the suspicion of the governor.

It was the doctor's wish, and that of his fellow-conspirators, to keep the governor blinded to the true state of affairs, lest he should outwit them, or wreak his vengeance upon Ralph Chandos.

They desired to spring a mine upon him in his hour of fancied security.

The utmost discretion and caution were required.

Every member of the small council was pledged to the most absolute secrecy.

Thomas Crowl was, therefore, lodged at the "Royal George," a much frequented inn in George Street, and Meg removed thither with him, serving him in the double capacity of nurse and guardian.

The next morning, when Lord Strathmere visited the Chamber he had assigned to Crowl, he was greatly amazed to find it unoccupied. The servants could not answer his inquiries, and he returned to his private room in a perturbed state of mind.

Crowl being absent, a vacancy was made for Mr. Carew, for whom the governor sent at once, and whom he re-established at his desk.

In the course of the forenoon Lord Strathmere's suspense and anxiety were relieved by the reception of a letter from Crowl, dated at the "Royal George."

Crowl wrote that he had become convinced that Government House was peculiarly unhealthy as a residence for him, and that he had settled himself at a much-frequented inn, with his wife to watch over him, and that he had, moreover, engaged an able-bodied sailor,

who had left his ship, and whom he had encountered at the inn, as his body-guard and constant attendant.

Under these circumstances, he expected soon to be himself again, and to continue well. He added that Lord Strathmere might send to him at his new address the first instalment of the promised annuity.

This letter had been written at the advice of Dr. West, who had also counselled Crowl to accept the first payment of hush-money, and to conduct himself in every respect in such manner as to inspire the governor with the fullest confidence in him.

Lord Strathmere ordered his carriage and drove to the bank, where he obtained the large sum required.

He then proceeded to the "Royal George," and was conducted to Crowl's chamber.

He found his escaped prey lying upon a couch near a window, looking frightfully pale and weak.

He had just escaped with his life, and the effects of the poison were still visible in his pinched features and his hollow eyes.

Meg sat beside her husband, and a burly sailor stood at a window, looking out into the street.

The three faced the intruder, who put on an air of kindly interest and condescension becoming a lordly master upon a visit to a sick servant.

(To be Continued.)

A ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.

FIVE million pounds sterling is not to be picked up every day, and the man who picks it up is justly entitled to be called a millionaire. A few days ago Mr. D. P. McCarthy, a native of Cork, architect of Barrington Street, received a letter, signed G. A. Stanley, New Square, Lincoln's Inn, informing him as follows:—"I am directed to apprise you that the first instalment of the O'Keefe legacy has come to hand in your favour for £500,000. The whole of the greater portion of the five millions left by the deceased will come to you, except the portion allotted to your brothers, about which the Crown will decide."

The effect of this announcement, that a man has been declared heir to five millions and an income from real estate might naturally have upset the propriety of most men, but Mr. McCarthy received the intimation with great equanimity and thankfulness that his first cousin, Charles Robert O'Keefe, late of Allahabad, who died a bachelor, had left him such a splendid fortune, which made him a millionaire five times repeated.

A brief sketch of the history of so remarkable a man as he who created such a colossal fortune in cash, and besides left property worth £150,000 a year, can scarcely fail to interest the reader. The parents of the deceased Mr. O'Keefe resided in Cork, and carried on a respectable business there as general merchants. His father and mother had occasion to visit London, and there, contrary to all expectation, his mother was suddenly confined in a hotel, and gave birth to the founder of the colossal fortune of five millions. Both Mr. O'Keefe's parents died before he reached his majority. He had one brother and one sister, but both are dead. The brother died in Australia, to which he emigrated many years ago, and his sister died in Cork.

The chief heir in Limerick was often invited by the millionaire to go out to India, but he had to decline the tempting offer in consequence of a delicate constitution, unfitted to stand the torrid zone. He had also to decide a similar offer from the deceased brother to go out to Australia, to both of whom he stood in the relationship of first cousin, the mothers of the heir and the deceased being sisters. Mr. O'Keefe, being of a restless disposition, declared that he could not live in one locality, and was determined to travel. After a time spent in Cork with his father, and while yet only about 18 years of

age, he made his way to India, where he enlisted as a private soldier. Here in this new sphere of life his old habits never forsook him—he studied men, manners, but, above all, business. By assiduity and good conduct he at last received a commission, but he did not retain it long, believing that commerce was his forte.

Service in the East during the year 1842 naturally suggested to his mind that he could make money by engaging in the opium traffic and other branches of trade, and so he went into the opium trade, some said as an agent of the East India Company, others on his own account. Be this as it may, by close attention to business and "good luck" he soon acquired a colossal fortune—five millions of money in ready cash and an income of £150,000 from landed and other property! Mr. O'Keefe died unmarried, in February 1876, when Messrs. Carrington and Whigley, solicitors at Calcutta, advertised for heirs, of which apparently there was no lack, no fewer than 175 applicants putting in claims as the next of kin; but they were all put aside on investigation in favour of Mr. McCarthy, of Limerick, who has four brothers, each of whom will come in for a twenty-fifth part of the five millions and estate, but Mr. McCarthy will be the recipient of the great bulk of the fortune.

As before stated, Mr. McCarthy had often been wanted by his first cousin to go out to India, but declined, and the first intimation he had of his death was through Mr. Maurice Lenahan, J.P., handing him a paper in which the heirs were advertised for. Mr. McCarthy at once placed his case as heir in the hands of Mr. Isaac Butt, member for the city, who warmly interested himself on Mr. McCarthy's account, and has had a good deal to do with the recognition of his claims in conjunction with his brothers, Mr. McCarthy being the eldest. The heir is a very industrious and energetic man, and had just completed the building of a terrace on his own account, which he named Barrington Terrace, when the letter "On her Majesty's Service" proclaimed to him his unprecedented good fortune.

His father is an independent farmer residing at Abbeyfeale, where the mother of the millionaire died, and his family are in comfortable or even independent circumstances. The heir served his time in Cork with the building firm of Messrs. Dickson and Taylor. At an early age he started business for himself in Newcastle West, and after several years of close application was selected as architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners up to the period of the disestablishment of the Irish Church. Since then he has carried on his business in Limerick with his accustomed good business habits, and was in receipt of a competence, if not more, when he was startled by the sudden addition to his fortune. Mr. McCarthy is the father of ten children.

The last letter which Mr. McCarthy had from the deceased inviting him to go out to India was one in which he stated that he had 100 vessels trading on the seas to different nations and peoples, one of which he had never seen. In short, he said that he could not estimate the exact amount of money he was worth. Mr. D. P. McCarthy feels most thankful to all who assisted him in establishing his claims to this colossal fortune, and expresses a wish to prove his gratitude in a substantial manner.

SWORD SWALLOWING IN PAST DAYS.

ABOUT the middle of the year 1823 an Indian juggler, calling himself Khia Khan Krus, exhibited his tricks through the provinces. He was a small and delicately framed Bengali, with very dark complexion, and features almost feminine. His tricks would be thought very poor in the present day. A few deceptions with the usual apparatus, cards, cups, eggs, balls and handkerchiefs, ended with the great feat and principal feature of his performance. He swal-

lowed a sword about twenty inches long, or rather passed it down the gullet as far as the cross guard of the hilt. It was a short and unimposing exhibition, and as he spoke little English, was not very attractive.

The feat with the sword, however, raised a host of imitators; and one of them, a carpenter of the name of Dempster, travelled about the northern parts of England, exhibiting the feat in a rough-and-ready sort of way, at fairs and markets during the day, and at public-houses in the evening, simply making a collection amongst his audience after each performance. He used to call for a common dinner knife, and without any preparation pass it down his throat and then withdraw it.

In March, 1824, he was exhibiting his usual feat at a public-house in Carlisle, with a knife about nine inches long, having a common horn handle. A facetious countryman, in merry mood, thought it would be a capital joke to tickle a man who had a knife in his throat the while. The sportive individual carried out his intention, and the exhibitor, being taken off his guard, loosed the handle of the knife, which passed into his stomach beyond the power of science to recall it.

A subscription was made to defray the expense of Dempster's journey to London to seek the advice and assistance of Sir Astley Cooper, the eminent surgeon of the day. Dempster travelled by stage coach, and when he arrived at Manchester, the motion had produced such painful symptoms, that he was advised to continue his journey by canal. After a rest of a day or two, the symptoms abated, and he proceeded on his way by water; but was compelled to halt at Middlewick, where, on the 24th April, 1824, he died of inflammation caused by the constant motion during the first portion of his journey.

After his death it was found that the horn handle had totally disappeared, and the whole was so greatly reduced in weight and size by the corrosive action of the stomach as to convince Sir Astley Cooper that had Dempster been kept perfectly quiet, Nature would, by her regular digestive action, have relieved the sufferer of his dangerous burthen. Too great eagerness to seek the aid of science had not only hastened, but probably caused the fatal result.—H. O.

THE INVISIBLE COMMODORE; OR, THE SECRETS OF THE MILL.

CHAPTER II.

A SQUAT, deformed figure, as hideous as any Mexican or South Sea idol; a head like a battering-ram; a face as angular and cavernous and abysmal as an extinct volcano; jaws like an alligator's; eyes like slumbering fires—these were the leading characteristics of the black little monster.

He was the Deputy's familiar, or valet—his most intimate and trusted servant—the only progeny of the old "mammy" we have seen at the haunted mill.

There were heavy welts and bruises on his cheeks. His low forehead was streaked with blood.

He was horrible beyond expression to look at.

But he grinned ferociously. He was even more jubilant than excited.

"Him rival yonder," breathed the dwarf, with a wave of the hand, as the Deputy joined him.

"My rival, Quoddo? You mean Ackley?"

"Yea, master. Him pris'ner. I show you."

The dwarf led the way rapidly from the garden to the wooded fields that stretched away to

the northward and eastward of the Government House.

Within five minutes he came to a dark object lying on the ground in a small open space within a thicket.

This object was a man, compressed into the smallest compass possible, and literally entangled in abundant cords, besides being gagged.

"Lieutenant Ackley, sure enough!" muttered the Deputy, after a close scrutiny. "Take the gag out of his mouth, Quoddo. I'll hear from his own lips what has happened."

And while Quoddo was unfastening the gag, the Deputy added:

"No outcry, now, Ackley, or your life isn't worth a candle."

The mouth of the prisoner was soon relieved of the gag, and, at his request, his position was made more comfortable.

"Thanks, Major," he said, "I shall be quiet, no doubt, as becomes my situation."

"Enough! Why are you in this fix?"

The prisoner hesitated a moment, endeavouring to scan the inscrutable countenance above him.

He was one of the Deputy's daily associates, being an officer of the garrison—young, ambitious, daring, honest.

"If you are what I suppose you to be, Major," he said, "it will be dangerous for me to speak frankly. Nevertheless—"

"What do you suppose me to be?"

"Whatever you are, you are not the real Major Clyde—that much is evident. I think you are a pirate, and a leader of pirates—perhaps Captain Mallet himself!"

The Deputy started as at the view of a bottomless abyss.

"Then how do I happen to be in my present position?" he asked, sneeringly, recovering himself.

"Easily enough, sir," answered Lieutenant Ackley, calmly and smilingly. "I have only to suppose that you, or some of your people, captured the real Major Clyde, with all his papers, when he was on his way to take possession of his post of Deputy Governor, three years ago, and that you either killed or imprisoned him, and have stepped quietly into his shoes!"

The Deputy turned livid. His eyes glared savagely, his teeth showing again in a murderous smile.

"As I suggested," pursued Ackley, "you may deem my frankness a mortal offence, but I am an honourable and truthful man, and would not tell a lie to save my life. Besides, your black is here to tell everything, in case of any default of information on my part. Let me relate, therefore, how I came to be in this awkward situation."

The Deputy motioned him to go on, still glaring at him with eyes of deadly menace.

"There are people who deem us rivals, Mr. Deputy," continued Ackley, "and it is true that we have both been rejected by Miss Morrow. I only allude to this matter as a preliminary to saying that my desire to woo and win the lady may have sharpened my wits against you. Be this as it may, I came to the conclusion lately that you are a dangerous impostor, Major."

"What are the facts about Major Clyde? His family is numerous and powerful in England. He had never been to America before receiving his commission. The ship in which he sailed was captured by Mallet. Four days afterward you put in an appearance here. You came ashore in a small boat, pretending that you had escaped from Mallet's ship. You announced yourself as Major Clyde, and produced the major's commission as Deputy and various other papers. But you are not the real major."

"Becoming thoroughly convinced of this, I watched and followed you. I overheard some of your confidences with this black demon, and my suspicions were strengthened. Several days since I resolved to pounce upon Quoddo, take him prisoner, and force him to confession. An hour since, meeting him here, in one of his constant

and mysterious rambles, I attacked him—and here I am!"

The Deputy laughed contentedly, while Quoddo rolled over and over on the ground, in a convulsion of merriment.

"He! he! such a fight!" he laughed, holding his sides. "But Quoddo too much for him!"

"I'd no suspicion of the strength and activity of the black rascal," added Ackley. "I could have shot him, of course, at an early stage of the struggle, but before I realised my inability to cope with him he had me at his mercy, having knocked me senseless with the butt of one of my own pistols!"

"It's a common mistake enough," commented the Deputy. "Have you said anything to the Governor, or Miss Morrow, or any other person, concerning your theory, or suspicions, of my identity and character?"

"No, I haven't. I was waiting for proof."

"Which you meant to extract from the dwarf? I see the whole project. Quoddo!"

The slave ceased his convulsive motions, and stood grimly erect before his master.

"Gag him again, Quoddo," ordered the Deputy, "and take him to the Hole, and then come to my room. I daresay I shall have a chance to ship him to-night. If not—"

He finished with an emphatic gesture, as he wheeled about and retraced his steps quietly in the direction of his quarters.

"My saddle's getting hot," he muttered.

"How many others are watching me suspiciously? It has been four months since Miss Morrow sat down in my presence. The governor himself confines himself to routine business, consulting me very little about his plans for the future. He at least realises that no good has come of all my advice for three years past. Ha! ha! is it not a sweet farce? But the sky is evidently clouding. Were it not for my elaborate resources I should really have trouble to keep posted and to maintain myself in the stirrups. But fortunately I am posted, and, what's more, I am master!"

As he neared the Government House, he perceived signs of an unusual excitement, orders resounding, voices calling, and numerous slaves moving about with torches.

"Visitors of some sort," he muttered. "Let's reconnoitre."

He drew near cautiously, investigating by ear and eye the bustle before him, and then advanced boldly, adding:

"It's all right. That vessel is in!"

The governor was still walking on the esplanade, plainly revealed in the light that now streamed out from the reception-room. The Deputy quietly rejoined him, showing no traces of his recent excitement.

"The 'Alliance' has arrived, major," announced the governor. "I expect her commander every minute. Let's go in."

The couple entered the reception-room, where they were immediately joined by Miss Morrow. Scarcely a minute had passed when Captain Chuddley, of the "Alliance," was announced. He was a distinguished-looking officer, in the prime of life, with a countenance as expressive of sense and goodness as of courage. He carried one arm in a sling, and looked pale and worried. He was followed by his purser and another official, who bore a modest mail-bag.

The usual greetings having been exchanged, Capt. Chuddley hastened to say:

"I am sorry to be the messenger of bad news, Governor Morrow. But my entire convoy of three ships has been captured by the pirates—by the band of Captain Mallet! I myself barely got away by the skin of my teeth, losing half my men in a resolute attempt that was made to carry us by boarding. The event took place the night before last, about a hundred miles to the eastward of Trinidad. Our loss in killed and wounded exceeds eighty, and the booty secured by the pirates will exceed a hundred thousand pounds sterling! Here are lists of persons and property destroyed."

A strange hush of consternation followed, as the commander laid the lists in question on the table and dropped wearily into the nearest chair,

while the postmaster of the town and garrison made his appearance and began overhauling the mails.

"And the mystery of the whole affair is, Governor Morrow," resumed Capt. Chuddley, "that we have again been betrayed. It was agreed, you will remember, that we should keep away nearly a hundred miles to the southward of our usual course, and so avoid the latitudes where the pirates were likely to be watching for us."

"Well, this programme was known only to ourselves, Governor—only to four or five of us, including your Deputy—and yet the arrangement seems to have been betrayed again—but how? The few necessarily in the secret have not revealed it, but somebody has played the spy to terrible purpose; the secret has been borne to Mallet's headquarters; and the entire force of the pirates has been rallied for our destruction."

The governor wrung his hands in silence, making no other immediate answer than an audible groan.

He was simply stunned by the new disaster. The fleet in question had been the object of great hopes and expectations.

Various distinguished and wealthy families had taken passage in it for the colony.

Its supplies of stores and merchandise had been immense; and now all had gone into that ever yawning maw of destruction—the power of the pirates!

"I do not know what to say, Captain Chuddley," said Governor Morrow, finally, with broken voice and attitude, looking as if ten years of terrible experiences had passed over his frame during ten minutes. "I am simply crushed. Heaven knows that I have made every effort in my power to rid the world of those pirates. I have been active—sleepless. I foresee, however, that this great disaster will produce a feeling against me at home which I cannot withstand. I shall send in my resignation by the very next vessel—if happily the pirates will allow us to send another mail to Europe."

"Here's an 'official' letter for your excellency," said the postmaster, handing out a formidable looking document. "I trust it will pour oil upon the troubled waters."

The governor broke the seal with trembling hands, his daughter leaning anxiously over the back of his chair.

A few swift glances told him the nature of the communication before him, and a smile of bitter disgust appear on his lips.

"I may as well tell you at once the purport of this document, gentlemen," he said, with pallid and rigid features. "I am no longer Governor of Barbadoes. I am removed!"

"Removed?" echoed all present, in an excited chorus—all save the Deputy.

"Yes, removed, because of the 'unfortunate result' of all my efforts for the 'suppression of the pirates.' Removed, at my age, and after my long services!"

Captain Chuddley started abruptly to his feet, his honest face glowing with indignation.

"I cannot realise it," he cried. "Please let me see that letter!"

He glanced over the document hastily, and then his anger became tempestuous.

"This is simply infamous," he muttered. "It's the work of some lying villain—the result of some plot against you! Somebody has been sending home false reports!"

"Added to which," said Governor Morrow, "is the fact that I have been very unsuccessful—"

He was interrupted by a cry of wonder from the postmaster, to whom every glance instantly reverted.

That official was staring at the superscription of a letter he had just taken out of the mail-bag, and which he held at arm's length before him, as if it had been a deadly viper.

"Here's a letter for Major Clyde," he ejaculated, "addressed to 'His Excellency, Major Clyde, Governor of Barbadoes.' Ah!"

All eyes turned upon the Deputy. He was

quiet and smiling as ever. He had stood as calm as a statue during all the preceding excitement.

This was his wont, however. He was renowned for his nerve and self-possession. He was always ready for everything.

"If the heavens should fall," had once remarked the governor, "that Deputy would crawl out somewhere under the edges."

It was not without a tremor of emotion, however, that the Deputy received from the hands of the postmaster the official letter addressed to him as governor.

A fiery red glow had appeared in the centre of each cheek, while all the rest of his face was as white as marble.

"This is merely a clerical error—the mistake of some scribe in the Home Office," he said, laughing lightly. "Permit me to show you."

He broke the seal and tore open the envelope.

Two documents tumbled out.

One was his formal commission as Governor of Barbadoes; the other a long letter of instructions. There was no mistake or doubt in the premises.

A pause full of unutterable things followed. Then the Deputy again laughed lightly.

"This is only carrying the mistake a little further than I expected," he said, in his smoothest voice. "I am equally with your excellency the victim of some mistake. Permit me to consider this commission not received, and to ask you earnestly to continue in charge of affairs here until further advices from England."

For the first time in months Miss Morrow gave the Deputy a look that pleased him.

"Oh, there's no mistake," said Governor Morrow, sadly. "I am out, and you are in. Permit me," and he arose, extending his hand, "permit me, Governor Clyde, to be the first to congratulate your excellency upon this well-deserved promotion."

The other gentlemen present joined in the sentiment.

"My daughter and I will return to England by the first vessel," pursued the governor, "and I know we shall find in retirement a peace and happiness to which we have long been strangers. When do you sail for England, Capt. Chuddley?"

"As soon as possible, your excellency—that is to say, as soon as I can find men to take the place of those who have been killed and disabled—a job which I am afraid will not be readily accomplished. What inducements can we offer men to go out and be killed before morning by the pirates? I say before morning, for the reason that several pirate ships have chased us into port, and would doubtless seize the 'Alliance' to-night if she were not anchored under the protection of the guns of the forts and batteries!"

At this information the father and daughter exchanged anxious glances.

"The sea is blockaded, then?" questioned Governor Morrow, bitterly.

"Possibly, until another ship-of-war drops in to our relief," answered Capt. Chuddley, frankly, "unless we can man the 'Alliance' suitably, and give the pirates the slip in the darkness. As your excellency is doubtless aware, she is rather fast, and it is to this fact that we owe our escape from the eager pursuers!"

Governor Morrow looked more disgusted than ever.

"A fine state of things, truly, he commented. "But come into the library, Captain, and I will order refreshments. We will leave the new governor to his duties, consulting with him later about our departure!"

Within a few moments thereafter, the reception-room was vacated by everybody save the new governor, Miss Morrow having accompanied her father and the others.

How the mien of this man changed, as he found himself alone, and his eyes contemplated the spot at which they had vanished!

"At last!" he muttered. "My little plans have worked! I am in possession! Your

obedient servant, Governor! Yours, too, my dear Miss Morrow!" and he smiled fiendishly. "It only remains for me to reap the harvest I have sown! Triumphant! triumphant!"

A great iniquity and imposture had indeed been accomplished!

A daring and unscrupulous plotter, who had usurped the very name by which he was known, had become the chief authority of an important colony!

An infamous murderer, who had not hesitated a moment at a cold-blooded assassination, had taken the place of a man of integrity and honour!

"Yes, the game is all in my own hands now," the successful villain assured himself, as he gazed after his victims. "My word is law here. I have the royal commission to back and sustain me. True, it is made out to Major Clyde, but until it is shown that I am not Major Clyde, no man will be found bold enough to dispute my orders. And even in case of detection, what need I fear? My allies are many. My resources are beyond computation. That proud governor's daughter shall be mine immediately. The governor himself is entirely at my mercy. Let the play end when it will, it will end to my complete satisfaction. At last I am master!"

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

A NEW AND POWERFUL EXPLOSIVE.

WE learn that the inventor of dynamite has recently discovered a new explosive substance still more powerful than that. He has given it the name of "explosive gelatine," on account of its aspect, which closely resembles gelatine. This substance is composed of 94 to 95 per cent. of nitro-glycerine, and 6 or 5 per cent. of collodion, mixed together. It is viscous, but can be easily cut with a knife or with scissors, and placed in cartridges or shells. Dynamite, it is known, has the disadvantage of being alterable by water—when it is moist the nitro-glycerine separates from the absorbent.

The new substance, on the contrary, does not give the least symptom of exudation; it is impermeable to water, which does not at all affect its explosive properties. It is inflated in the same way as dynamite, and its power is at least 50 per cent. greater. Italy and Russia have, it is said, adopted this substance for charging bombs, torpedoes, &c.

PRACTICAL UTILITY OF LUBRICATORS.

DR. JOULE, one of the most distinguished chemists of the day, has made a thorough investigation of the subject of friction and heat; and it is now not only well known that the loss of heat is a loss of power, but the value of the power lost can be estimated almost to a fraction.

"We may gather from this knowledge," says Mr. W. H. Bailey, when we apply it to workshop economy, that if a pedestal or bearing becomes so hot through friction as to cause one pound of water to be raised one degree Fahrenheit in temperature in one minute, heat has been lost equal to that which would be created by a weight of one pound falling through a space of 772 feet.

"We are told that if we apply this conversely, heat has been lost which would lift one pound weight 772 feet; and if we apply these illustrations still further, and imagine forty-two pedestals or bearings losing heat by friction in a similar manner, we may inform ourselves that we are losing nearly one horse power, because they represent 32,424 foot-pounds of force; and if we know from our books what our coal costs, it will take very little trouble to give us the exact cash value of this friction and destructive action."

RECTIFICATION OF BEZINE.—In the examination of the products obtained in rectification of the benzine of gas manufactories, M. Vincent has found quite a number of interesting substances. Sulphide of carbon is very abundant. Ordinary alcohol is present also in notable quantity, and M. Vincent characterises it by the preparation of sulphovinate of baryta, iodide of ethyl, and bromide of ethyl. Lastly, there is a considerable quantity of cyanides of methyl, the extraction of which, he thinks, might be made industrially profitable.

A RIVAL TO THE "GREAT EASTERN" STEAMSHIP.—A new steamship of enormous dimensions is about to be built by Messrs. John Elder and Co., of Govan, Glasgow, as an addition to the Guion line of American steamers trading between Liverpool and New York. With the exception of the "Great Eastern" this vessel will be the largest merchant steamship ever built. She will be nearly 600 ft. long, being in this respect almost equal to the dimensions of the "Great Eastern" herself, whose length is a little more than 600 ft., the average length of the large Cunard, Inman, and other of the great American liners being not more than from 400 ft. to 450 ft. The new vessel will be from 5,000 to 6,000 tons burthen, and will be fitted with powerful engines. She is intended to be clipper built, and when completed and on the station is expected to cross the Atlantic in a shorter space of time than has ever yet been effected.

INFLUENCE OF ELECTRICITY ON EVAPORATION.—Since it was proved that there is electricity in the air, both in time of storms and under ordinary conditions, many physicists have sought its origin. It has been chiefly attributed to vaporisation of water, but this now seems doubtful. Thus, in tumultuous boiling, which no doubt causes electrification, solid or liquid particles are thrown against the walls, and where this cause of friction is avoided all trace of electricity disappears. And a very slow evaporation must furnish very little electricity. M. Mascart has lately approached the subject from another point, and studied the influence of electricity on evaporation. He placed a number of basins of water or moist earth under conductors of grating form, connected with a Holtz machine, which was driven by a water engine and enclosed in a case, the air of which was kept dry. The basins, too, were enclosed in a case in which the air was regularly dried. The conductors were kept at constant potential. The evaporation was always increased under this action, whatever the sign of the electricity; in some cases it was even doubled. If the temperature vary considerably in the enclosure in which the basins are placed the influence of the electricity is entirely veiled.

AN EARNEST LIFE.

EARNESTNESS does not always move with a clatter. There are other things in this world which are quite as pleasant and edifying as the rub-a-dub-dub of a snare drum. In fact, this kind of melody is not generally the highest kind of music. Have you never known a man bustling and officious, clamorous and loud, but who did not weigh heavy after all?—a thing very well understood by everyone except just the man who might have profited by that piece of information. And have you never known a man quiet and unostentatious and faithful, and who was a perpetual blessing—a golden man, deep-souled and true, whose memory lingered long after he was gone, like light upon the hills after a gorgeous sunset?

The shallow stream rattles along its course; but when it is met and drowned by the majestic tides rolling in from the sea, there is silence on the hills. In the great tide there is the power of more than a hundred rivulets, yet its coming is almost as quiet as the celestial forces that bring it. The tide flows down and shallow grows the stream, and again the empty chattering goes on.

And this is what we wish to say, that things most potent, although demonstrative, as indeed they must be from their effects, are not necessarily noisy. A strong, earnest life need not make what some people are in the habit of calling "a fuss." It is better known by the lead which strikes than by the gun which sends it.

THE PARIS EXHIBITION.

ONE of the greatest attractions of the world's fair will be the Japanese section, in which will be exhibited a bit of Japan in miniature. They have, in fact, two divisions—one on the Champ de Mars, and the other on the Trocadéro. The former will comprise Japanese productions and manufactures; the latter 3,000 superficial metres in extent, is closed in at present by an open palisade of bamboo.

The Japanese have set their hearts upon reproducing within these limits a corner of their native country, with a dwelling-house, a sleeping pavilion, farm buildings, plants, wheat (which is already sown, and will spring up in a few days), and finally, a remarkable collection of the most beautiful flowers of Japan. The latter consignments have been placed in the Paris Conservatories, where they will remain until a favourable moment arrives for transplanting them in good condition.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

THE annual report of the Director of the National Gallery for the year 1877 has been issued. From it, it appears that the only donation during the year was a painting by George Morland (1763-1804). It represents "The Inside of a Stable," said to be that of the "White Lion" at Paddington. Two horses and a pony are being led into a stable, while to the left a man is stooping and collecting together some straw. The painting is in oil on canvas, and is 4ft. 9 inches high by 6ft. 7½ inches wide. It was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1791, was purchased by the Rev. Sir Henry Bate Dudley, and presented to the Gallery by his nephew, Mr. T. B. Wolfe.

The galleries in Trafalgar Square were visited by 1,332,794 persons on the public days during the year, showing a daily average attendance on such days (190 in number) of 7,014, being an increase of 1,000 per day since the issue of the last report. The collections received, on students' days, 20,313 visits from students. Independently of partial studies, 773 oil-colour copies of pictures have been made—viz., 345 from the works of 73 old masters and 428 from the works of 34 modern masters.

The whole of the collections of paintings, drawings, and sculpture are contained in the galleries, Trafalgar Square, the paintings numbering 1,030.

THE GOVERNMENT BANKRUPTCY BILL.

VERY shortly stated, the main features of the Government Bankruptcy Bill are as follows:—The first result of a petition in bankruptcy under the Act would be not an adjudication, which it is proposed should not take place for a month, but that the property would be vested in a trustee as a security for the benefit of the creditors. The creditors, being in a position to form their own opinion, the debtor might be discharged without any further proceeding, or his affairs might be wound-up; and it might happen that the debtor would not be adjudicated a bankrupt at all.

The Bill proposes to do away altogether with liquidation by arrangement under the 125th section of the Act of 1869; but debtors would still be enabled to carry out any arrangement which creditors might desire to come to with them. It is proposed that the trustee should

be appointed by the committee of inspection, which would be composed of creditors only.

The Bill further provides that the accounts of trustees should be audited in all cases, so that if there was any extravagance or waste of the estate the loss so occasioned would fall upon the person who caused it. Then there were limitations put upon the charges which trustees could make and also as to the powers of majorities to bind minorities. There were other provisions which simplified the debtors' summons, and which required the trustees of debtors' estates periodically to account.

The Bill is much the same as that introduced into the Upper House last session by the Lord Chancellor, which Bill was framed in accordance with the report of a Committee appointed by the Lord Chancellor, and which report was issued in July 1875.

THE WIMBLEDON MEETING.

VARIOUS alterations have been made on the Wimbledon regulations, which all Volunteers will do well to consider. The most important of these is the extension of the qualification for the St. George's Vase. Up to the present time only two representatives have been allowed from each company, but now this competition is placed on an equal platform with the Queen's Prize, so far as representation is concerned. The desirability of this step can scarcely be questioned. The possession of the St. George's Vase has already stirred up the zeal of the Volunteers, and there can be no doubt, as was the case with the Caledonian Challenge Shield, that the extension now granted will add immensely to its popularity.

BEARING REINS.

THE ligamentum nuchæ of a quadruped, as is well known, supports the head, and in health relieves muscular tension in maintaining the weight; but that is surely no reason, says the "Lancet," why a rein connecting the mouth by a bit with the collar which bears on the cervical vertebra, near the vertebral prominences, should be imposed on the animal to supplement the provision made by nature. Under the best of circumstances, casting out of account the pain and injury inflicted on the mouth of the animal, the effect of this rein must be to throw the weight of the head upon the muscles instead of the ligaments.

If from weakness the horse allows its head to drop, the aim should be to restore the vital strength of the natural support, not to place the burden on a part of the organism which the ligament was intended to relieve.

COLOUR BLINDNESS IN RAILROAD ENGINEERS.

THERE is a difficulty in some persons in distinguishing colours arising from the distance of objects. To all persons not absolutely incapable of distinguishing colour, distance makes all objects blue. However brilliant may be the green upon a distant mountain, it appears blue to the observer. But how far distant must an object be in order to lose its appropriate colour, as we should find it when near at hand, and is that distance the same for all persons? It varies with all persons according to their length of sight, so that a lamp on an engine at night that would show red or green to some would appear blue to others, and engineers should be tested not alone for power of discriminating colours ten feet or ten yards off, but at half a mile, a mile, or two miles distant also.

We would rather trust a vivacious woman than a vain one.

INSECT EATING PLANTS.

MR. FRANCIS DARWIN has recently added some important facts to our knowledge of these plants. It has long been surmised that these plants which catch and kill insects in various ways depend upon such food for their healthy growth, but direct proof of this has heretofore been wanting.

Mr. Darwin instituted a series of experiments to decide the question, as follows: 200 plants of *Drosera rotundifolia* were cultivated in soup plates filled with moss; each plate was divided into two parts by a low wooden partition and covered with gauze to exclude insects. On one side of each plate the plants were fed with small pieces of roasted meat, placed upon the leaves, every few days, while those on the other side were not allowed any such food.

In the course of a month the effect of the meat diet was evident in the brighter colour of the leaves, and when the experiment was ended it was found that the plant had received much nourishment from the animal food. While there was a decided gain in every way, the greatest advantage was found by comparing the seeds produced by the different plants. The ratio between the weight of the seeds from those without animal food and those with it was as 100 to 379.7.

Any of our readers can arrange to carry out experiments like this which could not fail to be of interest and value.

A MODEL of the New York Post Office, constructed on the scale of one-thirty-second of an inch to the foot, has been sent to the Exhibition. It was built from the plans, and contains 284,000 pieces. It occupied the time of one man, working six hours a day, for six years to complete it.

AUNT HEPSIBAH'S REVENGE.

I WOKE, on the morning of my eighteenth birthday, with a light, happy heart, untouched by care, or pain, or sorrow. It was one of those glorious June days when it is bliss merely to live; when we are content to draw in the pure, sweet-scented air, and drink in Nature's fresh beauty, asking for nothing more.

The robins, outside my window, in the old apple tree, greeted me with bursts of glad melody, and the clear morning breeze filled me with a sense of indescribable exhilaration.

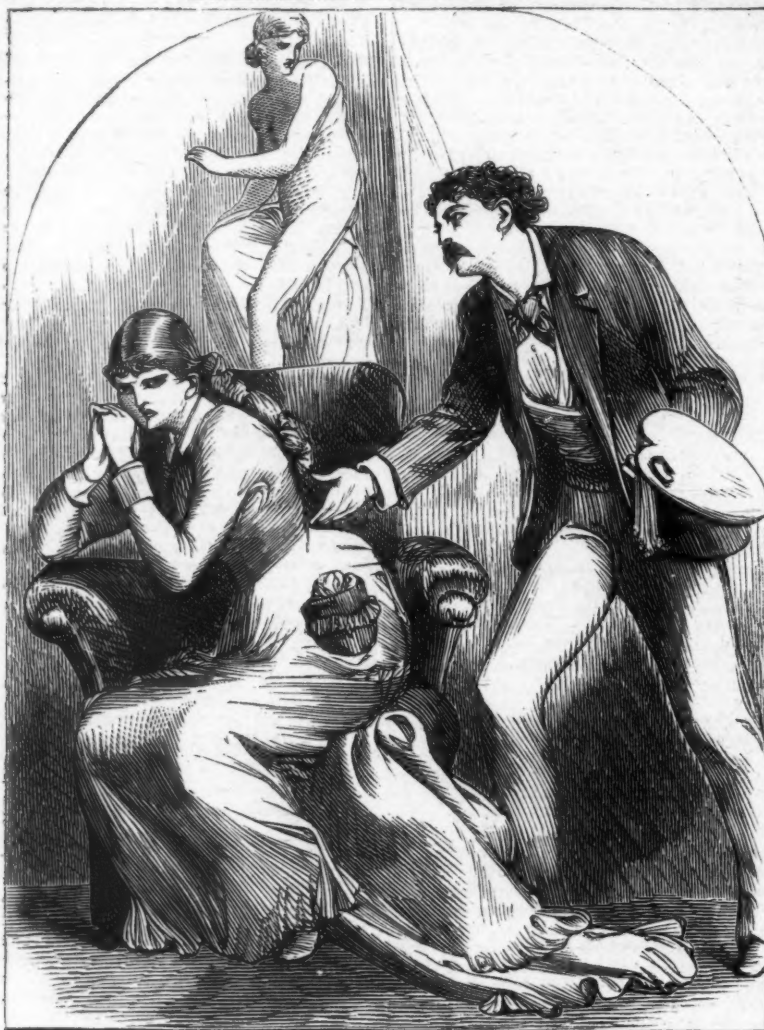
The closing exercises of the 'Young Ladies' Seminary, in our town, had successfully terminated the day before. We had passed our examinations, read our essays, received our diplomas, partaken of the class supper, and gracefully retired from the stage of school-girl life; and today, as a grand finale to the momentous occasion, we were to have a picnic in the Glen, a perfectly lovely little spot, some ten miles away.

In all the world, I think, there was no one happier than I that morning. I hastened to array myself in my new and pretty white muslin dress, and ran down stairs to receive my birthday greetings, singing a gay little song. Father and mother were waiting for me in the library, mother looking a little anxious and worried, I thought.

"Eighteen years old, and a grown-up young lady! Papa, just think of it!" and I danced into the room, and was folded in my father's arms; while he bestowed nine kisses upon one cheek, and nine upon the other.

"Eighteen years! Bless my stars! how the years do go! It seems only a matter of months, since I held you, a wee bit of a baby, in these arms."

"But mamma looks sober," said I, and I ran and knelt by her side. "What is it, dear, darling mother? Does it make you sorry to have your little girl grow so big, and so old, that she can never be a child any more?"



[THE MASTER PASSION.]

Mamma smiled and laid her hand, with a gentle, caressing touch, upon my hair; then she said, tenderly:

"You will never cease to be a child at heart, Mabel, however great the accumulation of years upon your head. And now, dear, your father has something of importance to tell you."

"Yes, dear child, of great importance," broke in my father. "It is about your Aunt Hepsibah's will."

Aunt Hepsibah's will!" I exclaimed, in astonishment, for that estimable lady had been dead over two years; and the disappointment I felt at the time, that my father, her only brother, was not remembered in her will, had been long overcome. The possibility of there having been a codicil, in favour of us, at once, however, flashed through my mind.

"You know, Mabel," said my father, "that, ostensibly, everything was left to that protégé of hers; but there was a sealed document, retained in the hands of the lawyer, which document he sent to me yesterday. According to Aunt Hepsibah's wishes, it was not to be opened, neither were we to know of its existence, till you should arrive at the age of eighteen. This little piece of paper, Mabel, makes you the possessor of six thousand pounds, and me of four. A very nice birthday present, isn't it, little one?"

I was so surprised, I could not, for some time, speak. At last, I said, in a bewildered sort of way:

"Six thousand pounds for me, and four thou-

sand for you? Why! Six and four make ten."

Then, clapping my hands, I jumped up, shouting:

"Oh! how rich, how very rich we are. Ten thousand pounds!"

And I gave papa a good hug, and then mamma. My world was surely growing very bright. Although we had always been comfortably off, we were far from being rich; and my dear father, I knew, had had a hard time, in trying to keep the old homestead and clear off the mortgage which still shadowed it. I had always longed for wealth, and many were the fair castles in the air, and the glorious projects I had formed, when the day should come in which riches should be mine!

Yes, the world looked fair, and bright, and wide, to me, stretching on, rich with golden opportunities.

My future lay in broad sunshine before me with no gloom of tears to veil it. How kind at heart Aunt Hepsibah had been, after all I said. And I had always thought her cold, and stern, and strange. Suddenly, I asked:

"How came she to do it, papa. Why didn't she put it in the will?"

"Your Aunt Hepsibah was always queer, and never did things like other people," he replied. "She has made one condition to all this, which will not be very hard for you to accept, I think. Is it, that you—"

"Please, Charles, never mind that now," my mother gently interposed. "The breakfast bell

has rung, and Mabel must get ready for the picnic. To-night will be time enough for that."

Dear, tender mother-heart! Was it to give your child another day of perfect happiness, a day to be marked with a white stone, that you shielded her from a knowledge which might pain her?

Was it intuition that taught you that the condition which my father thought would be so easy to fulfil, might not be possible for me?

My father silently acceded to my mother's request, and folded the precious slip of paper, and replaced it in the envelope; then we sat down to breakfast.

I was too excited to eat, and the attempts to appear calm and cool, that my dear father made, were very amusing.

He cautioned me against losing my head, with my good fortune, and warned me against being completely upset, when smiled upon by the good fates.

My mother was very quiet, and regarded me with an anxious look, which in my unthinking gaiety of heart, I did not notice at the time; but it all came back to me afterwards.

Soon after breakfast, we heard the sound of voices, and gay, ringing laughter; and a waggon full of merry girls and young men drove up to the door.

Several of us were to go on ahead, and make all the preparations; and the teachers, professors, and our fathers and mothers were to come later as guests.

Mother helped me get all my things together, and whispered, as she kissed me good-bye:

"Better not speak of what has happened to you, my child! There will be time enough, and you have yet to consider the condition, you know."

"Yes, I know, dear mamma," I replied. "I shall say nothing about it, of course, yet awhile. You will be sure and drive out with father this afternoon?"

So saying, I ran down the steps, and was assisted to my seat in the high, open waggon. A delightful drive we had, out to the Glen, in the beautiful June weather, with the glad freshness of spring blooming all about us, and with singing of birds, and the sweet fragrance of flowers everywhere.

"Did you know, Mabel, that we are to have a handsome stranger here to-day?" said Mattie Evans.

"A stranger?" I said. "Who is he? And how did you know of it?"

"I saw him get off the coach last night, and go into Mrs. Martin's. He had a large valise with him, and a sort of a portfolio under his arm. In a few minutes after, I saw Mr. Russell hurrying over there. That's all I know, except that the young man is awfully handsome, with quite a distinguished air."

We reached the Glen, and soon everything was ready.

The table was superb. It only needed the exquisite centre-piece, which was to grace it later, to make it perfect. We were to present our Principal, Mr. Russell, with an elegant silver basket, filled with fruit and flowers; and this was afterwards to grace the middle of the table. Soon the people began to come in carriages and waggons, everyone in the best of spirits. Finally some one shouted, "Mr. Russell is coming. Let's receive him with cheers." So we all went forward in a body, waving handkerchiefs and hats, and shouting, "Hurrah!" There was someone else in the buggy, beside him, who seemed to enjoy this tumultuous welcome. Mr. Russell, as soon as he alighted, turned to this gentleman, and said:

"I have brought a friend with me to-day, who I trust, will not feel that he is a stranger among us. Young ladies and gentlemen, I have the honour to introduce to you Mr. Frank Wentworth, who is to spend the summer in our delightful little town, and transfer bits of its beautiful scenery to his canvas."

Mr. Wentworth lifted his wide-awake, and made a graceful, deferential bow. Mattie was right; he certainly was very handsome, with a

finely-moulded, clearly-cut face. His manner was easy and natural, as he entered into conversation with those standing nearest to him.

We now gathered around the bountifully spread table, and Mr. Russell made an opening address, which was followed by a few complimentary remarks from others. Then I stepped forward, as representative of the graduating class, and with a few words and many blushes, presented our tribute of gratitude and love to our instructor.

He was much pleased, and thanked us in a very impressive manner; then we all sat down, and the business of the day commenced.

My seat was directly opposite Mr. Wentworth's, so we talked together, for most of the time. I noticed him, frequently, regarding me particularly; and, girl-like, I felt flattered. When the meal was over, we broke up into little groups, and went off in pairs, Harry Johnson and Fred Ormsby going with two of my school-mates, and Mr. Wentworth asking permission to join me. We all kept more or less together, however. By-and-bye we paused by a grassy bank, and sat down.

"I have brought my sketch-book with me," said Mr. Wentworth, after awhile, producing a tiny one from his pocket, such as artists carry, "and I am glad I did, for you three young ladies make such a pretty picture, that I should like to make a drawing of you. May I?"

My companions cried with one voice, that it would be charming.

But Mr. Wentworth paused for me to speak, and did not begin, until I had blushinglly assented, vainly trying to prevent the blush, and angry at myself for blushing, for I feared it would be seen.

"Will Miss Howard raise her eyes, please?" he said, by-and-bye. "I cannot make the features complete without them."

So I lifted my eyes, from the flowers lying in my lap, and looked off into space. I was thinking, when he spoke, how happy I was; and the happy feeling, in my heart, had not sprung entirely from the fact that I had been made an heiress that morning.

I was glad to be young. I was glad to be well and strong. I was glad to be fair, and glad to be admired. There had been no hard places in my life as yet; the path had all been smooth.

Perhaps the root of my happiness lay deeper; but I was content not to analyse it; I was satisfied to feel it only.

When the picture was finished, we all crowded to look at it.

There we were, in easy, careless attitudes, form, feature, expression, each true to life. I was rather startled at my own face. Did I look like that? Mr. Wentworth had given me a sort of an enraptured, ecstatic expression, which I had never seen in my own face, in the glass. I could not help asking:

"Do I look like that? I did not know that I did."

"Not always, perhaps. But certainly, you looked so while I was drawing you," he replied, slightly amused.

"Yes, Mabel," the others cried. "You look just like that, whenever you are happy, or pleased very much."

"And were you very happy, or very pleased just then, Miss Howard?" Mr. Wentworth asked.

"Yes," I answered, looking down and blushing very much. "I was so happy that I could not help thinking of it."

"You are to be congratulated," and then, in a lower, more earnest tone, he added: "May you have, throughout your life, such thorough happiness for ever."

My father and mother had now come, and seeing them, I introduced Mr. Wentworth, and begged him to show the sketches he had made.

"It is a splendid likeness," my father said. "We must have you paint Mabel for us, while you are here, if you will, Mr. Wentworth," he added, courteously. "We have always wanted a good picture of her."

"I shall be most happy, Mr. Howard," was the reply.

That evening, as mother and I were talking over the incidents of the day, I happened to think that I had not heard all there was to hear, about my new found fortune.

"Your aunt Hepsibah," said mamma, hesitatingly, "gives all that money to you and your father, on the condition that you—that you will—marry her protégé, young King."

"But I've never seen him, mamma. How can I tell whether I shall like him or not?" I cried, starting up.

"I know, dear, it is hard to decide upon a matter like this, in this way; but your father and I thought, that, perhaps, as you have not seen many gentlemen, and have not become interested in anyone yet, it might not be improbable that you would like Mr. King. Lawyer Simmons has given your father very fine testimonials in regard to his character, and he is in every way worthy of you, if he can win your love. He is in America now, but in September he is coming home, and will spend a few weeks with us, and you are to decide then."

I listened, breathless. Was it true, that I had not yet become interested in anyone? Was my heart still perfectly free? Would it have been the same to me, if I had listened to all this in the morning.

I knew I could not answer yes to questions such as these. I managed to preserve a calm exterior, and for the first time in my life, shut the door of my heart from my mother's gaze.

"And what becomes of the money, if I do not choose to marry Mr. King?" I asked, very quietly now.

"It all goes to him."

"And what if he should not like me?"

"You forfeit it, just the same. But there is no danger of that, my child! Who could see and know you, without loving you?" And my mother folded her arms about me, and hid her face in my hair. Then after a moment:

"You must not consider us in the least, darling. I want you to do just as you feel in regard to it. You will have all summer. Of course four thousand pounds is a great deal to your father. He could pay off his debts, and settle down contentedly for the rest of his life; but he will never require you to sacrifice yourself. Only men, you know, do not quite understand a woman's heart, even after a lifetime's study; and he thought you would be delighted with the chance of a good husband, in conjunction with your fortune, and he, of course, cannot imagine any possible drawbacks to it. But I shall not blame you, my child, if you find it impossible to accept your aunt's proviso; and if you decide to give up the money and your husband, I shall understand why you do it, and feel for you. I do not like to blame your Aunt Hepsibah, now that she is dead, but it does seem rather cruel for her to restrict you in this way. It looks a little like revenge. She never forgave your father for interfering in her early love affair."

"But why should papa have to give up his money, even if I do mine?" I said.

"I suppose it was to influence you the more. But now, dear, do not trouble yourself any more to-night; just put it out of your mind entirely. You will have plenty of time to think of it, before you decide. Good night, my precious, good-night," and she kissed me tenderly many times.

I retired also, but not to sleep. The day which had begun so bright, ended in a night of misery.

Yet who shall say there were not guardian angels hovering near, though I could not see or feel them, in the darkness.

"Oh! it was worse than cruel," I cried, "for Aunt Hepsibah to revenge herself upon me, when I never injured her in the slightest degree."

And then I remembered her history, which helped to explain the will.

When a young girl, she had loved Alfred King, the son of a poor minister.

He had a refined, scholarly mind, but no faculty for pushing his way in the world. Her

father and brother objected to the match, and did everything they could to break it off.

At last her brother Charles, my father, got hold of some scandal which was attributed to him (though afterwards it was proved false), and reported it to his father, who shut his doors henceforward to Alfred King.

He also forbade his daughter to have anything to do with him; and after a long while, when she had become perfectly indifferent to everyone, she was persuaded to marry a very wealthy man, twice her age.

She never forgave her brother for the part he took in the whole affair, but after her husband died, she was left a childless widow, in a great gloomy house.

She sent for us to come and make her a visit. She took quite a fancy to me. I was then a child of seven or eight, and my father was very much pleased.

About eight years before she died, she had a letter from Alfred King, who was dying with consumption in California, begging her to come to him, if she had ever loved him.

She went immediately, and found him in poverty, entirely dependent upon the exertions of his only son, a young fellow of seventeen. His wife had been dead some years. Aunt Hepsibah made his last days comfortable and happy, and promised to adopt his boy, and treat him in every way as her own son.

On her return from California, fresh from the trying scenes she had just been through, with the love of her youth renewed, she made her will, leaving all to Alfred King's son, except the sum laid apart for me, if I married him.

Never had we seen this protégé of hers. She was extremely reticent upon the subject.

All we knew of him was, that he distinguished himself in college as a fine scholar, and that she had taken him abroad to finish his education.

They were travelling in Scotland when she died. No will was found but the one she had made eight years before. We had become resigned to the fact that she ignored us entirely, and now, behold! what an appalling appendix.

Probably she had been in hopes that I would be in love with someone else, by the time I should be eighteen, and so have a struggle something akin to hers. Through me would she wound my father.

"I will not take a penny of her hated money. She cannot buy me for her hateful protégé," I said to myself, while the hot tears ran down my cheeks. But then I thought of father, and how much good the money would do him. Oh, if I could only give up mine, and he be allowed to keep his.

"Aunt Hepsibah, Aunt Hepsibah! how could you?" I cried, bitterly, as if she were there to hear my reproaches.

After a while, I became more quiet, and thought that, perhaps, by daylight, the case would not look quite so hopeless. Anyway I had till September, and perhaps, before then, something else might happen, which would rescue me from my fate.

The summer glided swiftly by, however; only too swiftly. My trouble was ever before me. There were fishing parties, pic-nics, rides, croquet parties, clam bakes, something going on constantly, but all failed to conjure away my spectre.

Mr. Wentworth was a great acquisition to our small village society. He was constantly engaged, and so it was the middle of August before he began my picture. I was daily getting more nervous as September approached. My father, however, took it as a matter of course, that I should marry Mr. King.

"Like him?" I overheard him say to mother, one day. "Why, of course she'll like him. He is an upright, honest, manly fellow, I'm told. What more could any girl ask? If she is getting any nonsense into her head about that young artist she had better get it out as soon as possible. I don't want her to disappoint me in this, and she won't if she's the girl I take her to be."

This, at last, opened my eyes. Mr. Went-

worth! Alas, my heart told me it was too late.

The hours I spent sitting for my picture were the only ones of peace and happiness I had. Mr. Wentworth talked, most of the time, while painting, while I listened in silence.

He spoke of the pictures of the masters which he had seen in America. And sometimes he would repeat poetry, or tell me some ancient legend.

He was always kind and thoughtful of me, and quite often he watched me, with a sad expression in his eyes. Once he said:

"Miss Mabel, something is troubling you."

But I turned away, and did not answer.

One day, it was the last of the month, when my picture was nearly completed, he broke out quite impatiently:

"I don't see how it is," he cried. "I cannot get it at all."

"Get what?" I asked.

"Why, I want the expression that I caught the first day I saw you at the picnic, you know. I have never really seen it in your face since. Where has it gone? I remember you said you were so happy that you could not help thinking of it. Now, couldn't you think of the same happiness for a few moments; and let me see if I can get the same expression again."

I lifted my eyes, but they were full of tears. Where had my radiant happiness gone? He dropped his brush instantly, and came towards me.

"Mabel, what is it?" he said, tenderly. "What have I said to cause these tears? I must know what it is that is troubling you. Do you think I have not noticed the change in you; how pale your sweet face has become, and how sad your eyes? It has pained me more than I can tell you, for I love you, Mabel, I love you," he cried, passionately, "love you so much, that I would keep pain and sorrow away from you always."

"Oh! You must not say such things to me," I exclaimed, starting up, and thrusting out my hands, as if to put him from me.

"Why not?" he said, anxiously.

"Because—because I am engaged," I sobbed. "Or rather, going to be—if I can make up my mind—to somebody else."

"And do you love this somebody else?" he asked, turning pale.

"No, I hate him. It is aunt Hepsibah's heir, and she has left papa and me some money, if I will marry him; but if I refuse, we can't have the money; and papa needs it, and I am perfectly miserable about it."

I stammered this out through tears that I vainly tried to keep back.

"Suppose you had the money in your hand," he said, "that has been left to your father, what would you do—throw the fellow over?"

"Indeed—indeed, I would," I said, hastily. "I would refuse his offer point blank, and not touch the money that has been offered as a price for me."

"And you wouldn't give him a chance to win your love? Even I must say that is hardly fair."

I felt my face grow hot. I could not answer. I was half angry with him for taking Mr. King's part.

He saw it probably, for he resumed at once.

"Not that I regret it," he said. "On the contrary, it gives me hope. Take my love, my whole heart into your keeping, Mabel, and let my life be a part of yours."

I think he saw the happy look upon my face, once more the look he had asked for in vain—for he caught me in his arms, and kissed me again and again. After awhile he said:

"And so you are willing to give up a fortune for the sake of a poor struggling artist?"

"If you had but a crust of bread," I whispered, as I hid my face on his shoulder, "I would rather share it with you, than roll in wealth with Mr. King."

When I went home, tremulous with my secret, and in suspense till Mr. Wentworth should see my father, which he had promised to do the next day, I found that a note had come from

Mr. King, saying he would be with us on the following morning.

My face grew scarlet as I thought of the denouement to be made, and wondered how it would be received. The next day, about nine o'clock, a carriage drove up to the door. I rushed upstairs to my room, to prepare myself for the interview. What should I do? Frank had not come, and he had promised to see father early. I heard voices down in the parlour, father's and mother's and a murmuring undertone, which, of course, was Mr. King's.

In a few minutes my father called at the foot of the stairs.

"Come down, Mabel, you are wanted," he said.

I went down, trembling. At the door I paused, and summoning all the dignity I could, entered the room. Father, mother, and Frank Wentworth were there, but no one else.

"Where—where is Mr. King?" I stammered, in astonishment, stopping at the door.

"I am he, my darling! I am Frank Wentworth King," cried a dear, dear voice, and the speaker advanced, and taking my hand led me to the sofa, and sat down beside me.

I was so nervous and overcome that I burst into tears.

"Mabel dear, please don't. Are you sorry that the hated King won? My darling! I promise never to deceive you again. But can you blame me for wanting your pure, freely bestowed love, before you should know who I was? I could not take my bride on compulsion. I cannot tell you how glad I felt, and how relieved, when I found that money had no weight with you; and that it was only the loss to your father, that caused your grief. You do not blame me, Mabel?" he asked, tenderly.

"Indeed, how could I blame him? I was too happy. The weeks of sorrow and anxiety were over; the dark cloud was lifted and dispelled; I was folded in a radiant love, which would encompass me for ever."

Father and mother were overjoyed at the way things had turned out. I was to accept, after all, aunt Hepsibah's condition; but there was no longer any sting in her revenge. E. K.

FACETIÆ.

BOGUS.

As they were taking oysters the lady gave a little scream of rapture, and detached from one of the bivalves that had fallen to her share a pearl.

"I wonder," she said, as she examined it closely, "if it is worth anything. There does seem to be a flaw in it."

Her lord and master inspects it critically, and returns it with a sapient shake of the head.

"Bogus, sure," he says; "they couldn't afford to give real pearls with oysters at two shillings a dozen."

QUEEN'S ENGLISH.

WHEN her Gracious Majesty issues a Proclamation, she concludes with the phrase, "God Save the Queen." Would it not, however, be more concise as well as more natural to put "Bless my soul?"

MEN OF RANK.

It appears that there are ten thousand men on the boxes of the London cabs. From the elevated position they occupy, should not they be designated, "the Upper Ten?" —Funny Folks.

QUERY.

THERE is advertised: "To be sold, half a lady's share in a freehold house." Which half? —Funny Folks.

POLYTECHNIC—DIVING BELL.

THE following is vouched for as a fact: A well-dressed man a few days ago paid his fee to go down in the diving-bell. He entered, but just as it was swinging off he

called out "Stop! stop!" and bundling out, had only just time to make his exit ere the bell reached the water.

"What's the matter?" said Anderton, the attendant.

"Matter enough," replied he; "think I'm going to trust myself in there? The 'tarnal thing's got no bottom!"

THE other Sunday the deacon of a South London place of worship gravely announced:

"There will be a prayer meeting on Wednesday evening at 7 o'clock, which will last for six months." Evidently the gentleman believed in length of service, but has defective ideas of human endurance. No one could stand it, or sit it either. —Fun.

A LONDON bootmaker has the extraordinary announcement in his window—"Ladies will be sold at seven shillings a pair."

WHEN are most men's friends most like cabs? On a rainy day, for it is then very rarely you can find one. —Judy.

THE following correspondence recently passed through a telegraph office: "I lent you a pound one year ago to night. If you have not had it long enough please keep it one year longer." To this delicate hint the answer was returned:—"Had forgotten it, and hoped you had. Let her run another year."

FATHER TOO BAD.

CHINA declines to take back her own clay in the shape of size.

"GREY SHIRTINGS.—The chief feature to notice in the history of these goods is the utter collapse in the consumption of low, heavily-sized makes. Very low goods have become unsaleable even at a considerable reduction on the lowest quotation. The change took place about the middle of the year, when there began to arrive free supplies of goods more doctored and filled than ever. These the Chinese refused to recognise as legitimate."—Commercial Report of 1876 of Her Majesty's Consul at Shanghai.

—Punch.

DUE APPRECIATION OF ARTISTIC MERIT.

"THE doctor has been, Harry, and he says there's nothing serious the matter with cook, but that she requires port wine. So I'm going to give her some of that we got for baby last year."

"Good heavens, Mary, don't give her that! Give her whatever remains of the '34 your uncle, the dean, left us: and then go on with the '47, you know!" —Punch.

A PICK-UP-UP.

A SURGEON's wife called Mrs. Pick was last week charged with pocket-Pick-ing, under Pick-ular circumstances. Robbed in a long cloak, which gave her quite a Pick-turesque appearance, she was arrested in the vicinity of Pick-adilly. She is now in a very pretty Pick-le; and, if guilty, doubtless repents bitterly of her Pick-a-lillo, Pick-unlary embarrassment is generally suggested as the cause of conduct so des-Pick-able.

A GOOD TITLE.

If we ever build a theatre, we mean to call it the Niobe, because, like that lachrymose female, it will be "all tiers." —Funny Folks.

ITEMS FROM EGYPT.

THE Khedive has deferred paying his promised visit to the Sultan. He has deferred all his other promised payments likewise.

In the Said, or Upper Egypt, there's an enormous quantity of land uncultivated—in fact, the most unprofitable part of Egypt is the afore-Said.

The cotton crops have been bad. Many growers will certainly be completely "wound up" with their own cotton—albeit through not having enough of it to "keep the ball a-rolling."

It is difficult to estimate the amount of the bean crops, so as to ascertain the "pulse" of the country. (The crops might have been worse, though.) —Funny Folks.

WHEN is a frog king of ravens? When it is a crow-king (croaking).

THE POLYTECHNIC RE-PEPPERED.

Good news for all classes. Pepper is restored to the bosom of his Polytechnic family. Even lime-light, oxyhydrogen microscope diving-bell, and better than all, Mr. Willis's arrangement of Bunyan, have been insipid without the excellent stimulant of Pepper! —Punch.

OFF THE LINE.

RESPECTED SIR,

ME and my Usbing were last nite a talking about Haxidents which it is only nateral as E should take a hintrest in M seeing as he get his living as a Railway guard which when I says his Living its like to be the Death of im because of them there haxidents as is now so frequent. But there he says to me says he there wouldnt be not half so many if the tranes were all purvided with Continous Breaks. Continous Breaks I says why what for ever's that? Well says he its a new Patent as come over from Ameriky. There's the Vacuum Break he says and theres the Hortomatic Break & in pint o' fact says he theres sech a many breaks that the Directors they're that puzzled as they dont know which is best. Well I says it Puzzles me how breaks can be good for stopping haxidents which I've known a many haxidents as ave ended in a Break. And as for making breaks Continous I says there's the Jemimer she's as good as any Patent I can promise you—not to mention our boy Jim as can ardy touch a teacup without breaking of the andle & if E aint Hortomatic I don't know what is. So I remane

Your most obeejant Servant,

MARTHA MUDDLE.

SUPERFLUOUS.

THE new regulations for the prevention of fire in theatres, just adopted by the Middlesex Magistrates, prescribe, inter alia, that wet blankets shall be kept at the wings. Surely this is unnecessary, on first nights, at least, with so many wet blankets already in the stalls appropriated to the critics. —Punch.

ARMY RESERVES.

WHAT John Bull keeps to support the called-out men's destitute wives and families. —Punch.

JINGO'S RECEIPT.

How to make men slaves—drive them into the arms of Russia. —Punch.

THE NEW PEER.

MRS. MALAPROP is glad that "the unhappy nobleman" at Dartmoor has at last got his rights. She hears that he has been called to the upper house under the title of "Baron Orton." —Punch.

BUTTER MERCHANT AND M.P.

Who should succeed Butt as leader of the home-rulers? Biggar, as representing not Butt, but butter. —Punch.

SPOKEN AND WRITTEN.

MRS. MALAPROP writes to ask the pronunciation of "Ignatieff." The general's name, as spoken, is hardly distinguishable, we believe, from "Ignite-chief," and if Mrs. M. should prefer to spell it as spoken, "Punch" sees no objection, but would rather admire the new nomenclature as "neat and appropriate." —Punch.

"WHEN A BODY."

SOME paragraphs have recently appeared adverse to the "Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy." We really cannot see anything very dreadful in a clergyman's son having a corporation, especially if he be somewhat broad in his views, and more or less of stout principles. —Fun.

"CRUEL ONLY TO BE KIND."

THE "Standard," lately told us, under the heading "Extensive Festivities at the Hospitals," that "At St. Thomas's, 280lbs. of nice rich plum-pudding was served out to each patient." Surely this must have been on the

principle of flat experimentum in corpore vili, with the intention of giving next day a grand demonstration of the power of Hospital treatment in cases of indigestion. The report concludes with an allusion to the evening which followed this awful festivity, when, as we are told:

"Those who were convalescent appeared highly delighted at the kindness shown to them by all the officials, and even more delighted in attending to those more unfortunate patients who were unable to move from their beds."

The wonder is, not that some of the patients were unable, but that any were able, after such a cram, to move from their beds! —Punch.

STATISTICS.

REGISTRAR-GENERAL'S STATISTICS.—A table, prepared by the Registrar-General, has been issued in England and in the registration divisions and counties in the year 1877. The number of marriages registered was 194,343; the number of births 887,055, of which 451,515 were males, and 435,540 females; and the number of deaths 500,348, of which 260,517 were males and 239,831 females. The population of England was estimated at the middle of 1877 to be 24,547,309. This estimate was made on the assumption that the rate of increase or decrease which prevailed between the two Census enumerations in 1861 and 1871 was maintained up to the middle of 1877.

TWO DAYS.

ONE held a rare and peerless joy,
'Twas at the radiant verge of May,
Sweet snows of balmy buds were white,
Upon the hedge rows all the way,
As down the still, green lanes we
walked,
Where sweet the blue birds, sang one
day.

The twilight's lustrous, purple glooms,
Upon the musky air slipped down;
The stars their golden glories lit
Above the pine wood's dusky crown;
And false blue eyes looked deathless
love,
That day of days, to eyes of brown.

ONE held a bitter, hopeless woe,
'Twas when the autumn woods were
gay
With blush and bloom, of fire and
gold,
And amethyst and silver grey—
Round breezy echo-haunted heights,
The mists were softly rolled, one
day.

A burning crimson sunset poured
A sudden splendour on the air;
Like restless spirits, rising gales
Fled shuddering down the hillsides
bare;
Beside the grave of Love I stood
That day of days, and faced—de-
spair. C. F. L. W.

GEMS.

As the dew falls noiselessly upon the just and unjust; as the present passes silently into the past; and as the perfume of a kindly act rises heavenward unseen; so the hired girl slips out of the back way of nights, with a little tea and sugar for her nearest of kin.

As there are some faults that have been termed faults on the right side, so there some errors that might be denominated errors on the safe side. Thus, we seldom regret having been too mild, too cautious, or too humble; but we

often repent having been too violent, too precipitate, or too proud.

AVOID all exaggerations and boastings, backbiting, abuse, and evil speaking; slang phrases and oaths in conversation; depreciate no man's qualities, and accept the hospitalities of the humblest kind in a hearty and appreciative manner; avoid giving offence, and if you do offend, have the manliness to apologise; infuse as much elegance as possible into your thoughts as well as your actions; and, as you avoid vulgarities, you will increase the enjoyment of life.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SORE THROAT.—Soak a small piece of bread about the size of a hazel nut, and then take a pinch of cayenne pepper; mix and roll up in the form of a pill, which the patient must swallow, when in about three hours he will be relieved from all pain. In a severe case a second dose may be requisite, which has never been known to fail.

TO CLEAN CHINA.—China is best cleaned, when very dirty, with finely-powdered fuller's-earth and warm water, afterwards rinsing it well in clean water. A little soft soap may be added to the water instead of fuller's-earth. The same plan is recommended for cleaning glass.

ICE-CREAM.—To three pints of cream add three pints of milk, one cup of sugar, one egg well beaten, one table-spoonful vanilla flavour; put into the freezer without cooking.

WHOOPING-COUGH.—Pound best black rosin very fine, and give as much as will lie on a shilling in a little moist sugar three times a day, commencing before breakfast in the morning. I have known it to cure the most obstinate cases of whooping-cough in three weeks.

ORANGE SALAD.—Cut several oranges cross-wise into slices an eighth of an inch thick, place them on a flat glass dish, one piece half covering the other, until the surface of the dish is covered; sift pulverised sugar over them, then add a third of a small wineglassful of brandy, or any good liquor, and serve. Peach salad is made with sherry wine in place of brandy.

GROUND RICE PUDDING.—Mix three large spoonfuls of ground rice, in a little cold milk; let it boil about fifteen minutes, stirring all the while. When cold, add four eggs, a little lemon; sugar to the taste, and bake it one hour. Line the dish with paste, or not.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ABOUT 1,000 weavers have struck work in a Glasgow mill against a reduction of 10 per cent.

THE births registered in the parish of Kilmar-nock during last year numbered 1,004—a decrease of 35 on 1876. Deaths, 560; decrease, 33. Marriages, 166; decrease, 52. The number of marriages is the lowest recorded in any year since the Registration Act came into operation, and the number of deaths is the lowest since 1863.

RENT AT BRIGHTON.—A little house with shop has been built in the King's-road, Brighton, under the direction of Mr. Arthur Lander, which is somewhat novel in design, if not particularly beautiful. It is said to be the smallest building, as a house, anywhere, as a table 6 ft. square cannot be put inside it. Yet it is let at £150 a year.

BERLIN, which has now a population of one million souls, possesses no fewer than 7,200 public-houses and cafés, being rather more than one such an establishment to every 139 of the inhabitants. Many of the new beer-houses, like the Reichshalle, are gigantic establishments, capable of seating 500 to 1,000 guests, and have considerable architectural pretensions.

THE cabin fittings of the new Cunard steamer Gallia are being made in Japan. It is stated that the work will be cheaper and better than if made in England.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. H. R.—Poetry very good, but we have no room for it.

J. B.—Overstocked, or we should insert your pretty lines.

S. B. N.—Contribution will be inserted in due course.

F. H. D.—When suitable and we have space with which to oblige our correspondents we insert their communications without making any charge.

ISCOGRO.—If you send your appeal to us in the ordinary way it shall appear in its turn.

CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—Send for particulars to T. Cook & Son, Excursion Agents, Ludgate Circus, London, E.C.

DAISY T.—Our supply is already much in excess of our requirements.

S. A. H.—Communications are not charged for. Your advertisement has been dealt with in the usual way.

USE AMIE.—We are compelled to decline your lines from pressure on space.

F. G. & S. J. W.—See answer to "Use Amie."

MARIE.—On leaving the room you should always shake hands with the host or hostess first; you may shake hands or otherwise with the guests as the degrees of intimacy or friendship with each may dictate. Your handwriting is moderately good.

ALIX.—Little or no jewellery should be worn during deep mourning, being out of harmony therewith, but a plain linen collar and cuffs are admissible.

W. C. C.—Lines far below publication standard—amongst other things, "food" does not rhyme with "wood," nor does "fried" with "alive."

A WELSHMAN.—Your question was answered recently.

J. S.—Your nerves are in a bad state. Take tonic medicine and as much exercise as possible, with regular living and early hours—rigorously avoiding alcoholic drinks and the smoking of tobacco.

A. T.—No charge.

J. H.—Apply to the consul representing the country which you propose to visit.

A CONSTANT READER.—Theoretically one has a right to persist in a course of action either for pleasure or profit which is a nuisance to one's neighbours, but, as circumstances alter cases, it would be well first to see what remonstrance would effect, then, failing that, take the advice of a respectable solicitor with a view to obtaining a remedy, for law and common sense for the most part journey together.

JOE.—Probably weakness allows energy to cause a displacement to occur and consequent irritation. Try tonic medicine and bathing with cold salt water.

TAKOBI.—1. Under the circumstances it would not be improper to raise your hat, and it is better to err on the side of politeness than rudeness. 2. Where practicable the lady should be given the inside place, but as we are not at all ambidextrous the gentleman usually reserves his right arm free to render service or protection. 3. Some freckles are irremovable and to some extent unpreventable. 4. Writing good enough, with care, for business.

N. B. R.—Possession is nine points of the law, but it is desirable to have the assistance of a legal practitioner in such a matter. An agreement made and signed while you were from illness unfit to understand its purport could be overthrown if that fact were substantiated. When you have the money actually in hand it seems to us that it cannot matter much to you whether you give for it one or two receipts if each party desires one. You can get a receipt from the solicitor in the ordinary way.

TRAVELLER.—An excessive use of diluents is very injurious to the bodily powers, as indigestion is directly induced through the gastric juice being too greatly diluted. But without incurring this result the unpleasant sensation of thirst to which you may be constitutionally predisposed, and which is intensified in proportion to the amount of dryness in the atmosphere and the exercise taken, may be very effectually allayed by the use of Cooper's Effervescent Lozenges, to be had, of we believe, most chemists, or certainly of the manufacturer and patentee, W. T. Cooper, 26, Oxford Street, W., in bottles, post free, for 1s. 2d. each.

MARY.—To polish furniture take of good alcohol one-half pint, a quarter of an ounce of pulverised resin, and the same of gum shellac. After this has dissolved add one-half pint of linseed-oil. Shake well.

S. D.—Not being acquainted with the author, we cannot tell you his name.

L. G. and C. B., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. L. G. is good-looking, dark. C. B. is fair, tall.

ELIZA T., twenty-three, fond of home, would like to correspond with a tall gentleman with a view to matrimony, dark.

J. J. and NELL, two friends, wish to correspond with two young gentlemen. J. J. is eighteen, tall, good-looking, fond of music, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition. Nell is eighteen, tall, dark blue eyes, fair, fond of music. Respondents must be about twenty, medium height.

SUSIE, twenty, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-five, fond of home and children.

RUBY, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman.

S. B., fair, of a loving disposition, thoroughly domesticated, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-four.

EDITH, nineteen, tall, brown hair, grey eyes, would like to correspond with a sergeant in a crack cavalry regiment.

BEATRICE and ANNIE, two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. Beatrice is nineteen, tall, fair, handsome. Annie is eighteen, dark, medium height, and of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about twenty-one.

BESSIE and NELLIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two dark young gentlemen. Bessie is seventeen, golden hair, blue eyes, good-tempered, fond of dancing and music. Nellie is seventeen, black hair and eyes, tall, good-looking, fond of music, of a loving disposition.

DAISY'S NEW HOME.

Ah! sweet was the glowing spring-time,
And the world with flowers was bright,
When we crowned our darling Daisy
With a wreath of bridal white!
And the youth was noble, proud, and gay
Who came to bear his bride away,
While the bells were chiming a roundelay
Of a love that knows no night.

Now, afar from the home of her girlhood,
By the lattice she oft will wait,
To listen for hurrying footsteps
And the cheery, swinging gate;
She hath no riches in gems and gold,
And yet her wealth can never be told,
For within Love's paradise joys unfold
For the lowly as well as the great.

And within her own quaint cottage
Like a bird she will flit to and fro,
For love's magic made bright the fireside,
And love's magic will keep it so;
If there the fair lady hands grow brown,
And sober grey rivals the gossamer gown,
She knoweth the womanhood's holiest crown
O'er a cross of home-care may glow.

Yet the burdens of life touch so lightly
Her beautiful, sunny head,
One must know that the fetters are silken
By which our sweet Daisy is led;
And now to her home there hath come a new
guest,
A wee, tiny cherub, the sweetest and best,
Who divideth the honours and doubles the zest
Of the rare when Love's banquet is spread.

And when life's last roses shall wither,
And life's evening shadows shall fall,
By the fireside that love makes sacred
May they wait the Master's call;
As bride and bridegroom their course life sweet,
And when time, the reaper, shall gather his
wheat
May greater bliss be theirs as they meet,
For aye, by the jasper wall. L. S. U.

PATTIE, MARIA, and POLLIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three seamen in the Royal Navy. Pattie is seventeen, tall, fair, light blue eyes. Maria is sixteen, fair, curly hair, dark blue eyes. Pollie is seventeen, tall, dark hair, hazel eyes, good-looking, and fond of home.

GEORGE, sixteen, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

A. E., twenty-seven, good-tempered, and domesticated, would like to correspond with a mechanic about thirty. MAGGIE and ETHEL, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Maggie is fair, hazel eyes, tall, fond of music, of a loving disposition. Ethel has dark blue eyes, fair.

LUCY C., forty, a widow, would like to correspond with a man about forty-five.

RHODA and ADA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men about nineteen. Rhoda is eighteen, light hair, blue eyes, medium height. Ada is seventeen, dark hair, brown eyes, medium height. Both of loving dispositions.

P. B. and A. W., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. P. B. is seventeen, light hair, blue eyes, medium height. A. W. is eighteen, medium height, dark hair, dark brown eyes, loving, fond of home and children.

EMMA and EMILY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Emma is fair, blue eyes, loving. Emily is eighteen, dark hair and eyes. Must be about twenty, tall.

CONSTANCE and MINNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Constance is medium height, fair, light brown hair, blue eyes. Minnie is dark, tall, black hair, hazel eyes.

FRENS, twenty-two, dark hair, blue eyes, of medium height, good-looking, fond of music and dancing, would like to correspond with a young man fond of home and loving.

K. S., twenty, good-looking, dark, tall, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen, dark hair and eyes.

F. E., a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-two, dark, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony about nineteen, fond of home.

STILVIA, twenty-one, medium height, golden hair, and dark blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman.

G. C. M. and V. D., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. G. C. M. is handsome, fair, tall. V. D. is good-looking, fair. Must be about twenty, medium height.

L. T. and D. S., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men about twenty-four. L. T. is twenty-two. D. S. is twenty, brown hair.

TIMOTHY, eighteen, tall, dark hair, grey eyes, wishes to correspond with a young lady about twenty-two, fond of home and music.

J. W. J., twenty-two, brown hair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition, thoroughly domesticated, wishes to correspond with a young man about twenty-four, dark, and loving.

C. D. and S. W., two friends, wish to correspond with two young men. C. D. is seventeen, medium height, of a loving disposition, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. S. W. is eighteen, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home and children, medium height, of a loving disposition. Respondents must be about twenty-one, fond of home.

F. J. E., nineteen, tall, of a loving disposition, dark hair, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty, fond of home and children, brown hair, dark eyes.

B. G. and FLORA, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. B. G. is nineteen, tall, light hair, dark blue eyes. Flora is eighteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of dancing.

E. C., twenty-five, dark, would like to correspond with a young man about the same age with a view to matrimony.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LILY is responded to by—William, twenty, good-looking.

NELLIE by—Harry, good-looking, fair, blue eyes, fond of music.

MAUD by—Gry.

ANNIE by—Fore Guy.

MARY by—H. NCG, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-two.

P. D. by—Hy S04.

EMILY by—Albert, twenty-two, brown hair and eyes.

NELL by—L. N0, twenty-two.

KATE by—Fe Os.

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MARY by—Harry, twenty-three.

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J. W. S. by—H. C.

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T. E. B. by—Pollie, dark, fond of home and children.

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